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FRONTIERS AND THE FUR TRADE



"The Portage" by Winslow Homer. Wide World Photos

FRONTIERS AND THE FUR TRADE

BY
SYDNEY GREENBIE



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To
ALISON

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

SYDNEY GREENBIE was born in North Dakota on June 28, 1889. Since his early youth Mr. Greenbie has believed in locomotion as the basis for historical research and education, and has carried out his personal method of study by traveling extensively in Japan, China, Australia, New Zealand and Europe. In preparation for this book he has traveled many thousands of miles through Canada and the North West. He is at present touring the world as President of the Floating University.

Mr. Greenbie has lectured at various universities and has been associate editor of several magazines. He is the author of a number of books including *Japan Real and Imaginary*, *The Pacific Triangle*, and *Gold of Ophir*.

PREFACE

THIS is the story of the two oldest pursuits of men, hunting and fishing, and their part in peopling the American continent and creating what is unique in modern American life and its spirit. Believing that we, the newest among the great nations, draw our extraordinary vitality and mobility of life from our greater closeness to certain primal sources of energy in wilderness living, I have tried to give the fur trade in America a wider and more philosophical interpretation than it has commonly received.

To do this I have first sketched in the geographical background, pointing out the special influence of forest and river in American history, and picturing, by contrast, the geographical and social characteristics of the towns from which the first hunters and fishers came. I have then given the historical background to fur trading and fishing in America, pointing out that life on the American frontier was after all only an extension overseas of the life on the European frontier. There follows the account of our fur trading and fishing interests in America, and their part in American history, drawn mainly from first-hand observation and original sources, and written with an intimate knowledge of the geographical background of the life here narrated, and with an acquaintance with similar life at the present time. In the end I have tried to emphasize the philosophical and cultural meaning of our long background of wilderness life.

The book makes several claims to novelty. In the first place, it has a background of travel and observation such as few historians make the effort to get. I have wandered over the length and breadth of this continent in the wake of the first hunters, and I have gone back to Europe and browsed in the towns from which they first came. In the second place, I have emphasized, more than is customary, the frontier background of Europe, and the great migratory and racial movements of which the settlement of

America was only a part. In the third place, I have avoided over-emphasis upon the purely political elements in American settlement. In the fourth place, I have endeavored always to find the psychological and philosophical implications for present-day American culture, and for our cultural future, in this wonderful, this superb background of the forest which is our unique, imaginative heritage. For I believe that the sources of our national life are still in the woods, and the fluent, coursing, outdoor life of hunter and fisher is at the very root of our national psychology—of our love of motion, our vital energy, our speed, our impatience with all static limitations, our sense of illimitable horizons of achievement still before us. Crude as the expressions of these instincts may be in the average American, they are what makes the American, as distinguished from other peoples; and, while we may be unconscious of their implications, there are few cultivated European observers who have not found in this purely American temperament a new psychic force in human life and culture whose potential influence is almost unlimited.)

The average man, who, more than the cultivated, is the true bearer of the national traits and powers, already feels instinctively the power of the woods, and the open road. In summer he goes northward and westward to the old seats of the trapper and fisher, with an old car and a tent. If he can afford it, he sends his children to summer camps to learn woodcraft and canoeing, swimming and campfire cooking, and to sleep at night in blankets under the stars. And when at last the son goes to college the mountains about Williamstown or Amherst or Dartmouth, the gorges of Cornell, may still environ him. The woods are no normal part of university life in Europe; the cultivation of woods and open spaces even about our colleges represents our effort to keep what is uniquely life-giving in our own civilization.

And so this story of the hunter and the fisher becomes much more than the economic history of America. It is offered for what it is worth as fact, but with the hope that the innumerable Americans who with the first breath of summer head for the ancient trails of trappers and fishers in Canada, and along the northern

Atlantic seaboard, and in the west, may find their own camp fires the brighter for the memory of the camp fires of old time heroes who still haunt our forest recesses. It is offered, too, with the hope that this history and this analysis of certain social and psychological factors in our past may help a little in the earnest effort of all thinking Americans of our day really to know and to understand their present.

SYDNEY GREENBIE

Castine, Maine,
October 1, 1928.

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FRONTIERS AND THE FUR TRADE

*“Geographie and Chronologie are the Sunne and the
Moone, the right eye and the left eye of all history.”*

RICHARD HAKLUYT

CHAPTER I

The Land of Nod

JACQUES CARTIER left his little walled-in town of Saint Malo in 1535 in a timid little boat and soon tossed about on the Atlantic, with memories of rivulets such as the Seine, the Loire, and the Rhine, eight hundred and fifty miles at the longest, to chide him for his foolhardiness. Then he came into a sheltered gulf of water which, because of the day of his arrival, he named after St. Lawrence,—and he sailed, and he sailed, and he sailed, and still he remained in almost unfathomable depths with banks that needed clear days for full seeing. He felt certain that at the other end of this endless stretch of water lay China.

Little wonder! Such rivers were not common in the old world. A river, Cartier called it, because he brought such finite terms with him to the new world. But a river is a thing of water lost in a channel of earth, whereas the St. Lawrence below Quebec is twenty-two miles wide. From the Plains of Abraham it pours over the horizon in two directions, and imparts dignity and perspective to a whole mountain range. Into it flow dozens of real rivers, and great lakes pay out their hearts to it in devotion. And two great nations were for two centuries to pour out their lives upon it. . . .

Cartier paused at Saguenay, content with so much of his Saint's donation.

Six years after Cartier discovered the St. Lawrence, de Soto, hailing from a Spain that knows no river of full six hundred miles, stumbled upon the Mississippi, and he found himself abroad upon a world of waters without a shore. The river sucked up the earth, and spread and spread, pale brown, like liquid mud, warm and lax, with moss-draped trees and leonine palms on land which water was continually eating away, and around which and

through which the muddy currents whirled themselves toward the sea. But de Soto, with his heart behind in Cuba, where luxuriated his newly won Dona Isabella, and his enchanted eyes fixed on the vision of the Golden City, barely paused long enough somewhere on its banks to fashion barges for his men with which to cross this mile and a half of distilled tempest. It took a century and a half for the Spanish from the south and the French from the north to measure its reaches from source to mouth. And when they had done this, they uncovered a river which, with its innumerable branches, spread, in lazy, formless fashion through fifteen thousand miles of earth, with 4,221 miles of running water in its own right. From icy Lake Itasca in Minnesota to the gulf the main stream alone is 2,553 miles long, or two hundred miles longer than the Volga, the longest river in Europe. . . . History made on the banks and waters of such a river must of necessity have in it something quite new to the European mind.

Seventy-four years after the discovery of the St. Lawrence, Hendrik Hudson sailed up a river that was but an ever-narrowing sea, walled in by shaggy rocks and over-topped by blue scallops of mountains. It was not a very long stream, but salt water ebbed, as it were, from the Palisades and the idle Catskills, and it rose and fell with the tides far up to the present city of Troy. But, failing to find Canton in the site where Albany now is, Hudson looked no further into that illimitable interior to which, for generations of later men, the Hudson, like the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi, was to be an open door. The river bears his name, but he himself went in search of greater glories. Up amidst the arctic ice-floes, his men mutinied, set him and his little son adrift, and brought their own worthless bodies back to Europe. Hudson was never heard from again.

Another seventy years went by. The sea to China was finally crossed, but not the intervening continent. Captain James Cook had sailed from Australia to Alaska, or thereabouts, with his eyes on the transit of Venus, and his prow set for a breach in the continent through to the Atlantic. He passed the forbidding bar across the mouth of a rumored river, but did not see the river. Vancouver

after him sought an entrance, but was fooled by the bar. That mighty river called the Oregon—where was it? A little sloop, merely a tender in the trail of the American vessel, the *Columbia*, but with a most appropriate name—*Lady Washington*—crossed the bar and laid open the last of the great American waterways to the passage of the white man.

In a fast train one may now trace, for a day or more, the course of that river—the Columbia—which has become the namesake of America herself. Vast fields of sage and sand and sauntering sand-hills, then mountains of basalt and staggering cliffs, unpeopled amphitheaters. A low gray river, bright and full and cheerful in spite of all the seeming desolation. Clouds of heat against domes of yellow earth, bleak yet heavenly. A stillness that is the compact of all sound. The Land of Nod on the east of Eden. Not a tree is to be seen, barely a patch of green turf, and only here and there a clump of sage. Fantastic forms of rock erosion rise like a cluster of men standing back to back as they were wont to do in pioneer days when attacked from all sides—massive promontories blocked and squared, baked fortresses, content to be only symbols, and willing to leave utility to those suffering from delusion.

Thence over into Eden and to Oregon. Here the Columbia lies full and gracious, a river in every inch, down to the bar which separates it from the Pacific. From the summit of Coxcomb Hill at Astoria, one can see it coming down from the northeast in full possession of itself and of all the landscape about. It has business with the sea and concerns itself little with incidental intrusions. To the left lie the Lewis and Clark and the Young rivers, pages attending their master.

Four mighty streams, passageways to a new world, a new conception. The phantasmagoria of the new world, dissolving from fade-out to fade-out, slowly unfolded the splendors of the land. Hennepin and Marquette at the west in 1680; John Ledyard at the east in 1773 gliding down the Connecticut from Dartmouth in his fifty-foot hand-hewn canoe; Mackenzie rushing on to the arctic circle in the far west—one by one they forced a

forbidding continent to yield to the map-maker. Year by year a new stream leading to a new portage opened new sources of woodland wealth to a Europe that had squandered its own heritage.

§

In the damp cool forest of evergreens on Coxcomb Hill overlooking the Columbia a monolith, one hundred and twenty-five feet high, was dedicated a few summers ago, in commemoration of the founding of Astoria—a fur-trading post to all seeming, but in reality one of those large dreams on which the youth of this nation was nourished and brought to manhood. The voices of speakers, declaiming on the old path-finders and hunters, could be heard through amplifiers hanging among the leaves. Resin, dropping like rain, clicked gently on the needles of the pines. The raw earth around the base of the unfinished monument looked like the earth around an open grave. And I thought then that it is well to be present at the dedication of unfinished things—the wedding of two unknown human entities, the christening of a ship about to go out to sea. For while many words were spoken about the past, this monument was in reality the dedication of a nation in the making.

We think of the first two centuries of American life in terms of little villages on the Atlantic coast. We forget that the whole country was inhabited by the wanderer, the fur hunter, and the trapper, passing up and down upon these vast waterways. But fortunately the early history of America does not lie in the mists of racial memory. It stands out in the daylight of recollection. In consequence, America gives breath and being, in the full flare of modern consciousness, to a figure which, in Europe, is lost in myth and historical confusion. This figure, worthy to stand as our Odysseus, is the fur-trader.

It is thousands of years since such a character dominated the scene in Europe. In order to balance the evidence, to clear the perspective, we must resurrect a period similar to our own in European history. To follow the fur-trader here is to find the pluck and spirit of a people released from the none-too-civilized circumstances of Europe into the highly conventionalized life

among the savage Amerinds. Had they been lesser men, these fur-traders, they would have reverted to savagery, but they found, instead, their outlet and their grail in the sheer freedom to move.

The fur trade was of the utmost importance to the development of colonial America. Its neglect has befogged many an issue in American history. America was founded on the bed-rock of economic realities, not in the fogs and bogs and blandishments of sentimentalism. Notwithstanding the innuendoes about Puritan shrewdness, it was that very shrewdness and attention to physical well-being that made their settlement secure. They undermined the claims and pretensions of the monopolists and the worshipful companies that sought only to squeeze profit out of the continent. The heterogeneous aspect of their settlements playing upon each other made hard and fast monopoly ineffective and gave stimulus to the movement of individuals out upon the hills and plains. The fur trade was one of the great economic determinants in the settlement of the maritime states, and was almost the only one in the winning of the west.

In Europe the forests were under the restraint of feudal proprietorship, full of dread of trespass and of stealthy brigandage. But in America, with savages all around ready to scalp and to torture, men roamed hither and thither, alone or in groups, hunting, trapping, surveying, mapping, forming alliances and dreaming of empire in the most magnificent dimensions. Far up the Platte and the Yellowstone, through three thousand miles of water, dropping down two hundred miles to an Indian encampment for horses at the risk of life—this was American life at its beginning, a life that brought a man face to face with himself. He could quake in his boots without fear of onlooker to call him coward; he could know terror unhaunted by the finger of scorn.

For three centuries the greater portion of North America knew human life mainly in connection with its rivers. These became symbols for freedom, power and security. The river men were river gods who could paddle their canoes through all sorts of rapids, for days, without resting. What the Nile is to Egypt,

the Volga to Russia, the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, the Hudson and the Columbia are to America.

The everlasting poet, reflecting on the perishability of human achievement, said that his name was writ in water. Writ in water! Particularly might that be said of some nations, and of America most of all. Never a creek in this whole vast continent but was etched by the paddle of savage, nobleman, and outlaw who left small trace of their private wanderings. Scattering before their canoes the goblins of the forest, they themselves assumed some of the proportions of myth.

Was ever a natural scheme more formed to harass and tease and frustrate the ambitions of seamen than the geographical structure of America? Four mighty rivers opening in from the sea, each broad and promising enough to lead one to believe it was a spacious passageway from ocean to ocean through the continent, leading alike to wilderness and disappointment. The St. Lawrence ends not in China but in a butterfly bow-tie of inland seas. The Hudson terminates—not in China—but in mud and trickles in an unnavigable chain of mountains. The Mississippi, draining a dozen Rhones for tribute, leads into trackless prairie and uncloven mountain range. The Columbia, the fourth great opening into the sea, shut the continental door in the face of navigators for decades. Besides these, the Connecticut, the Susquehanna and Monongahela, Potomac and Savannah, the Colorado and Rio Grande, the Fraser and Mackenzie—who can enumerate the rivers of America, so full of transcontinental promise, yet tantalizingly inattentive to the oceanic needs of a Europe that was looking for an easy route to the Indies.

When at last this eager hope was abandoned, these seamen, transformed by the rivers, laid their burdens upon them, and found themselves free men. In the waters of these rivers they wrote the story of America. The hunter could let himself loose upon one stream, however small, and from stream to stream find his way into regions hardly known to some of the savages themselves. But for the waywardness of these waters, the European hordes would have carried away the wealth of the land in a single

generation. Freedom hunters, treasure hunters, fur-hunters, adventure hunters, hunters of salvation,—one and all sought to put the stamp of their natures on the land. The shrieks of savages dancing or destroying, the songs of *bateau-men* gliding through the forests, the cyclonic conflicts of alien races, the prayers of priests and the pæans of small prophets—like one vast river raced steadily on from sea to sea, marking, claiming, dividing—to no avail. Old world crystallizations melted before the soluble restlessness of the new.

The power of the continent was irresistible, with its vast and terrible spaces and incalculable coursings. Even in our time trains follow mainly the courses of river beds, courses laid out for them by the track of the buffalo and the trail of the hunter.

Things which once seemed inerasably graven on the face of the land, seemed so prominent, so monumental, so permanent, have been lost in the morass of settlement, and year by year we have to add a marker here and a column there to keep the needs of the living from sweeping away the achievements of those who have lived. One may roam from end to end of the country without observing any clear-set stages in our evolution. Europeans see us as a people without contrast in a continent of bleak monotony. Our life being fluent as our rivers, they mistake our want of difference for lack of differentiation. Castles and moats there are none here, and what remains of the earlier times is generally confused by the word "fort." Forts in pioneer days were only stockades at best, forests without foliage, without roots or elbow-room. They stood upon the banks of our rivers, sometimes perched for vantage, sometimes for beauty of outlook. Built in the urgency of the moment and out of the substance at hand, they went the way of most things American—became re-absorbed into the land, disappeared entirely, and the spot on which they stood is often disputed.

But why look for monuments in America? We built our national life on running water. To Lao Tsze, the great Chinese philosopher, a running stream was the symbol of true living, shaping itself to every channel, going on irresistibly through every pos-

sible opening,—a formlessness potent, vivid, and invincible beyond the highest powers of form. Probably they did not think of this—those old fur-hunters. They only knew that they had somehow found release; and a return to walled town, and tribe, and family, and country and king and even church in Europe henceforth cramped them. And the true story of America is largely the story of the fur-trader, and of his brother the fisherman—the hunting and the fishing that found for us an empire and a round world. Beginning at dawn, somewhere in the eastern hemisphere, the hunter and fisher arrived in America at breakfast time. The hour will come when it will be high noon. But there is still much to do in the afternoon. By night there may be jollity and rejoicing. At least our home is now secure, and the land is ours.

BOOK ONE
EUROPEAN BACKGROUNDS

CHAPTER II

Amber and Furs

THE frontier history of America is but the extension over seas of the European frontier, the triumph on an enlarged stage as it were, of certain wilderness characters and tastes which for nearly two thousand years had carried on warfare with the advancing urban and feudal life of Europe. The history of America must therefore begin with the barbarian frontier of Europe. The same barbarians that broke up the Roman Empire later turned their energies and their interests in furs in other directions, and scattered themselves over the world. All this took many centuries. First we find the barbarians as the ever-receding frontier of the old Greek and Roman world—always an enigma and possible disturbance, occasionally troubling the wisest of the philosophers and poets with doubts, aspirations, and insights which had no logical place in the clear, simple, water-tight compartments of classical thought. Then we find them in possession of the old seats of classical power, in the Western Empire. Next they come down through Russia to the Black Sea and conquer the Eastern Empire. After that, as Vikings, having exhausted the possibilities of plunder in Europe, we see them crossing the Atlantic to Greenland, and then possibly to the main continent of America. The taking of America and of its great sources of fur and fish, was paralleled by a movement eastward across Asia by northern barbarians who now called themselves Russians, until finally, when Yankee and Russian met on the northwest coast of Oregon, these two branches of the same northern race came face to face, having gone in opposite directions around the world in pursuit of the same thing.

Nor were the empire builders who followed in the wake of

hunter and fisherman in America, without their roots in the remote past of Europe. Empire in America was a kind of logical extension of that imperial progress outward from Rome which began with the Cæsars. Spain, France, and England, the first conquerors of America, pursuers of gold and fish and furs, emissaries and creators of state and church in the new land, were the principal provinces of the old Roman Empire. Outgrowing their dependency, and coming, in land development to a full stop on the shores of the western ocean, they inevitably took to the sea and moved on.

Before Cæsar had conquered Gaul, Europe was a vast wilderness like America, astir with roving tribes hunting, fishing and fighting for a living. The scene is now blurred. The centuries have erased the tracery of savage life, as in a thousand years they will have erased the remnants of savage life from America. Our records have been verbally more complete, our scribes have noted the changes, but there were no Jesuits and no curious scientists in ancient Europe to describe the early development of the European man. But when we pick up a word here and there and permit our imaginations to instill life into them, a striking parallel between the development of Europe and the settlement of America is discerned, and the dramatic story of the fur-trade is seen as but the continuation of the same trade in Europe.

"And the Lord God made for Adam and for his wife coats of skins, and clothed them." So runs the biblical tale. From the dark caves in which man sheltered himself we get another story. God was not so considerate of the cro-magnon or the neanderthal man. He let him loose upon a world, without tooth or claw or fang, to struggle for his life against cold in nakedness, and unprepared for his fears with even memories of experience such as Robinson Crusoe had when he found himself on his desert island. But almost as though to add insult to injury, He gave man the unhappy gift of reason. Beset by terrors and hallucinations, a tempest of imagination in a teapot of consciousness, man had to think his way to safety. He had to discover the use of the club, to save the skins of his prey for a cape, and to so tie it gracefully

about him as to leave the outlines of his or his woman's body not only intimidating but alluring to the eye. For man is never so primitive that he lives on meat alone. He wants not only the freedom to run, but something alluring to run after. The primitive maiden had to consider not only which way the wind blew and to hang her wrap as protection against it before or behind, but to make sure that whether before or behind it was attractive. Thus it was even on Penguin Island. Then it was that the first flapper was born.

Leaving conjecture apart, legend and literature afford an inkling of the beauty and purposes of skins. To Usoos (possibly Esau) the Phœnician hero, is credited the introduction of the use of furs. These harbingers of civilization, the Phœnicians, coming out of the regions from Arabia and Persia, encountered in the Mediterranean peoples and circumstances not unlike the people and circumstances which met Europeans in their explorations of the Atlantic. Hanno, five hundred years before Christ, left in the Phœnician language an account of his earliest explorations. He had gone as far as the west coast of Africa, and tells of coming to a lake "that was overhung with large mountains, inhabited by savage men, clothed in skins of wild beasts, who drove us away by throwing stones." They captured some gorilla females, whose skins they brought back to Carthage. But the Phœnicians had no great use of furs. They were traders, not hunters, and sought the products of culture in preference to those of the chase.

Far up above the reach of sun-loving races about the Mediterranean lay an altogether different world from that to the liking of Carthage, Greece and Rome. The regions beyond the forests of Germany and Gaul were to them a sphere of "ice, snow, mists, clouds, and darkness, and . . . far, far away beyond the north wind, there lived a race of beings, whom they called Hyperboreans, or Outside Northwinders." This world was a region so thick with forests that a squirrel could have traversed hundreds of miles of it without once touching ground. Such was its effect upon the Roman world below it that they referred to these forests as bristling which was the literal meaning of the Latin word

horridus, a connotation that has come down to us in the meaning of the word "horrid." The fair-haired Nordic white men had passed backward and forward through these forests with their herds, keeping mainly to the east of the Rhine and thence down through the forests of the Danube. The forests were home to them as forests were home to the aboriginal Amerind, and from them, in some uncertain fashion, had come the Greeks, obliterating the traces of their Nordic origin as they more and more assumed the manners of Greeks.

Slowly, under the genial warmth of the Mediterranean they cast off the use of skins which had been their clothing in the forests, preferring rather to weave their woolens and their silks even though this meant shivering through a long, wet winter. Here and there we discover some relic of that ancient contact between Greece and the north. In Vetttersfeld, Brandenburg, Germany was found an Ionian work of art dating back six hundred years before Christ. It was a fish made of solid gold, engraved with a ram's head, a flying eagle, some lions attacking a deer, a boar, and a monstrous sea-god floating among the fishes. How it got to the region about Berlin is conjectural. Perhaps some northern fur-trader had ordered it from a Greek goldsmith when Greek colonies were strung along the Black Sea.

Still, skins of animals remained among the Greeks the garb of their heroes. According to Homer, Dolon wore a weasel-skin cap and a wolf-skin cape over his shoulders. Even though Homer's animals had no voices, they spoke a mighty language in the effectiveness of their skins when worn by the heroes, for he mentions most of the wild creatures—lions, wolves, jackals, even seals. Agamemnon and Nestor both wore lion-skins for comfort in the cold and for their decorative effect, Heracles likewise, while Paris and Menelaus preferred leopard skins.

But this did not indicate any special love of animals, or enjoyment in hunting and the chase. Wild animals become with Homer symbols for moral qualities. Somehow there is a vague sense of relationship between the civilized Greek world and a world lost

in the dim pre-literary past, and the world of beasts offers man an understanding of his purposes.

There came then a period in which Greece became conscious of the dangers awaiting her in the wilderness. In "The Bacchæ" Euripides shows that he felt the need in Greece of the revival of the subconscious powers through contact with wild nature. "The great nature-powers who give refreshment to mortals," he seems to say, "cannot be robbed of their due tribute without provoking a nemesis." He sees in the fur-wearing barbarians of the north and east the power lacking in the Greeks, and makes Dionysius a symbol of freedom through whom they were to be led back to the enjoyment of religious delights found only in the forest.

And so we find Dionysius followed by girls and married women, making for the wilderness. They awake at dawn on the mountain, not from erotic orgies (as has been vulgarly imputed) but from a pure sleep in the open with wild wood-creatures all around them. They are met and opposed by the shepherds, but they tear the flocks limb from limb and sweep down into the valley to trample the grain fields. Thus the fury of the wilderness destroys the two economic bases of civilized society. Euripides, sensing the fall of Greece, apparently believed that there was implicit in the wild, which he symbolized by the vine and the fawn-skin, some great, mysterious fount of vitality which he called again and again "the joy of life." Obeyed, this force might yet save Greece; ignored it would rend civilization.

The Romans, more remotely sprung from the soil they tilled, struggling to restrain the forests and the swamps and to resist the incursions of the barbarians from the north, also had their difficulties with the wilderness. At first they built a series of cities and forts above them, and turned their eyes to the east and to Africa beyond the seas. The story of the struggle of Rome to conquer its frontier resembles in many ways the conquest of the American frontier. Great Britain was then a land of savage tribes. France was not the peaceful land, every inch of which is worked over and over and kept under order and care. There were no gay

cities, no picturesque towns spired by imposing cathedrals, no vineyards, no sunny hamlets and mossy châteaux. Instead there were dreary reaches of black, huge forests with swamps and marshlands.

From the direction of Germany issued hordes of Germans, dressed in skins from head to foot, and conveying their armies over the frozen rivers. "Canada," says Gibbon, in the late eighteenth century, "at this day, is an exact picture of ancient Germany." Exact not only in the wide wildernesses with deep forests, but in the city-less, nomadic state of culture. The German huts resembled the Indian teepee, though they were not conical. Like the Indians, they depended mainly upon their cattle, with grain as a supplement. They knew virtually nothing of the use of metal, and, like the savage the world over, they were "by turns the most indolent and the most restless of mankind." They drank riotously, fought barbarously, and plundered vigorously in ways strikingly reminiscent of the dwellers on the plains and wanderers in the woods of North America. And all this, by the strange misuse of language, they termed freedom, and for that freedom they wrestled with the mighty Romans, to be subdued and finally to undo the greatest empire of all time. And it was this freedom, so neatly cultivated by the Romans in northern Europe, by the Britons in India, and the Europeans in North America that performed the miracle of civilization.

As in America, the soldiers of the several European powers that were seeking empire in the wilderness were to be found quartered in forts and buttressing a considerable trade with the natives, so in northern Europe were the ever-present Roman legions. Throughout the vast frontier masses of troops coursed along the rivers, four legions guarding the Rhine and eight the Danube, with military colonies along the way. Flotillas of galleys cruised up and down the rivers, and Roman roads opened communication with the government in Italy along both the frontiers and the sea. Carousing with the natives, organizing dances in mid-day, and all-night drinking bouts, supplemented by baronial cook-shops, the Romans introduced lower-middle class manners to the

barbarians. Slowly the conquerors turned over most of the real fighting to the Germans, taught them the secrets of their military success, and prepared them for their contest with Rome whose people would soon welcome the barbarian as a relief from the Cæsars.

What Rome got for all its toils is hard to say. Amber was one of the chief objects of trade. The fashion and the pride of the patrician, it formed the last touch to the well-dressed Roman lady, and adorned her hair and throat in profuse abundance. While the German woman drudged in her comfortless hut, compensated for her pains and her virtue by the respect and equality she enjoyed with her husband, the Roman woman, concerned neither with virtue nor politics, indulged in adornments and delights. The demand for amber sent traders through the deep silent forests with their broad, lazy rivers, far up to the Baltic where lumps of amber lay strewn about the shores. As the Spaniards sought gold in America, so the Romans sought amber. Along with the amber came sheafs of blond hair which was the envy of the black-haired maiden of the south. Vast congregations of traders gathered along the Euxine conducting a lively traffic in the petty trinkets and gewgaws of civilization in exchange for the rich furs and fishes that with much labor and hazardous pursuit, came out of the northern forests and off the steppes of Russia. Roman traders flocked everywhere, forming merchant settlements and factories along the Thames, the Rhine and the Danube.

The setting up of a soldiers' camp at once attracted the natives, as the erection of a fort in Canada or the far west brought the Indians from far and wide. Gradually there emerged the names of cities—Treves, Paris, London. The extent to which the Italian traders came north is shown by the fact that when the natives in Briton rose up in revolt against the Romans in 61 A.D. they massacred seventy thousand of them. Trade followed the flag, then as now.

Europe under these influences began to enjoy some of the blessings of tribal peace. Aelius, the traveling sophist, writing in

the second century, reports: "The entire continent is in a state of repose, and men no longer believe in war, even when it is raging at some distant point." Fifty years later, Tertullian said: "Every day the world is better known, better tilled, more wealthy. The roads are open to commerce. The deserts are changed into fruitful dominions. Tillage supplants forests. Everywhere are houses, people, cities; everywhere is life." Josephus declared: "In Gaul, the sources of wealth are at home (in the land) and flood the earth with their abundance." What had these wild barbarians to offer the Romans for their eagerness? Cattle and wine say some. But the Germans went to the Italians for better wines. Furs and amber were the most ready and obvious objects of Teutonic barter.

Cæsar remarked upon the extensive use of furs by the Teutons. Tacitus says the Germans wore "the skins of beasts, which the people near the borders are less curious in selecting or preparing than the more remote inhabitants who cannot by commerce procure other clothing. These make choice of particular skins, which they variegate with spots, and strips of the furs of marine animals."

At first, the Romans spurned the use of furs, resorting to wool until silk was introduced. Julia vied with Livia, discarding wool for silk and causing not a little gossip among the prudes who thought silk indecent because it accentuated the lines of the figure. But with the contact with the barbarians of Germany, furs won a place for themselves, first as rugs for floors and furniture, then as garments. With the importation of beaver, marten, fox and bear skins from the Russias and Scandinavia, these more pliant furs were turned into coats and tunics for winter wear, and the peasants who hitherto alone wore skins were robbed of their distinction.

When the slender, genteel, refined figures of the Roman legions first went out against the Goths we saw those long-haired northern chiefs, "aged warriors, whose bodies were wrapped in furs, and whose stern countenances were marked with honorable wounds." At the end of the struggle we find dissolute Romans, with famine and pestilence at every hand, imitating their invaders, adorned with fur tunics, long-haired, decked in barbaric trinkets,

rollicking through the streets of Rome until three special edicts from Emperor Honorius brought them to their senses.

The wilderness had conquered. The Roman Empire was crumbling and petty chieftains began to assume the manners of kings. The Franks split up into Frenchmen and Germans, and tusseled amongst themselves for dominance. In about four hundred years or more, the rude barbarian had risen to the rank of monarch and brought into the court the cloak of the savage. When in the eighth century, Charlemagne crossed with Roland over the Pyrenees, he declined royal purple in preference to a cloak trimmed with fur and a short jacket of otter or marten skin. Thence, from the courtesan of Venice in the south to Mary Queen of Scots in the north, from the scholar Erasmus in Holland to the Empress of Russia, furs began to be the sign of wealth and fashion, and ermine the symbol of kingly power.

CHAPTER III

From Viking to Venetian

SO much for Rome, the capital of the west. It is, however, with the fall of Constantinople, the capital of the east, that the particular barbarians who were to make the first attack on the furs and fishes of America, appear on the scene. For the founders of the Russian Empire were Norsemen, of the same breed as Eric the Red; and down to very recent times, the eastern and western branches of the Viking race were competitors for furs and empire in our own northwest—as is evidenced by the fact that we bought our own territory of Alaska not very long ago from Russia.

The Vikings were the most northern and barbarous branch of that European race to which the Roman Empire had already succumbed, inhabiting the wooded and craggy shores around the Baltic. Their outlook on life was largely determined by the fiords and vics from which they take their name. Their lives were circumscribed by the cold and barren regions they inhabited; but, if their reach was usually lengthened by the sword, their eagle appetites were not left unsated for want of courage. From the North Sea to the Mediterranean they left the impress of their might, and the terror of their daring. And to them is now given unquestioned credit for being the first Europeans on the coast of North America. They were the first fur-traders here, five centuries before Columbus.

They were a people with a unique code and character which have left their impress on both English and American ideals of sport, courage and violence. No people in the world could kill so neatly and so nonchalantly as the Vikings. A South Sea savage shrieks, an American Indian rages, a Mohammedan prays, and the modern European invokes the god Demos when he indulges in a kill. But a Viking just made a glorious gesture with his sword,

whacked off a leg or two, and shook hands with the remaining portion of the body with a right good will. Rude farmers and ruddy sea-rovers, these Vikings occupied their craggy heaths with an ever-watchful eye to the sea. If perchance a hapless whale came rolling in with the tides and floundered on the shore, they conveyed the good news to each other by signals and rushed in family groups down to dismember him. Should other neighbors happen to notice it at the same time there was certain to be a warm battle of blubber with missing arms and heads as part of the profit and loss.

What manner of people these Vikings were may be gleaned from the fact that they harassed the continent and all its islands for centuries, from England and Archangel. And they left behind them a literature as vigorous to this day as their code and their biceps were then. In pursuit of their marauding expeditions and their search for furs they sailed their little vessels down to the Mediterranean, round the coast of Scandinavia on the Arctic Ocean, and across the north Atlantic. In about 890 A.D., Ohthere of Heligoland sailed and sailed and sailed under the eaves of Norway, along the shores of the White Sea, and on to the mouth of the Dvina in Russia. Walrus-ivory, hides and skins, and a keen interest in geography led him on, and his exploits became the subject of wild discourse and were immortalized by King Alfred.

As Champlain followed Cartier, so seventy years after Ohthere, Eric, the son of Harald Fairhair, at the age of twelve, set out at the head of a fleet of five little ships entrusted to him by his father, and indulged himself in a mild war cruise. In this journey Eric reached Bjarmaland on the White Sea, that mythical land which has since been associated with the very heart of Russia down to Perm. The land of Perm which "looks like a vaporous cloud" had for the Vikings not only an attraction for its riches in gems and metals, but was in the heart of the great forest region, with a network of rivers leading to Siberia, Nizhni Novgorod, and even accessible to Greece and the Bosphorus. The traffic in furs in this part of Russia is almost as old as history. And thither one branch of these Vikings came. They founded Russia and became

acquainted with Constantinople, and left in one of their sagas a glowing account of the quality of the skins of its animals, of the idols of its temple, and the magic of its people.

Of all the peoples classed by the name of Hyperboreans,—dwellers behind the North Winds—the Vikings were the most impressive, and of necessity swathed themselves in great furs. Shaggy calfskin shoes, catskin gloves lined with furs, and black lambskin hoods lined with white catskin was the costume of a Norse prophetess named Thorbiorg. Thorkel Sursson, a Norse chief, wore a gray fur cloak with a gold buckle on the shoulder; Thormod owned a double-furred cloak, black on one side and white on the other; Thorolf flung over his shoulders a mantel of scarlet lined with gray fur; while “the everyday dress of An was a white fur coat, so long that it touched his heels; a gray short fur coat over it reached down to the middle of the calf of his leg; over it was a red kirtle, which reached below the knee.”

In trade furs were the medium of exchange, and in friendship the seal of good-will. When Helgi, a trader, left the home of Gudmund, the Powerful, with whom he had spent the winter at Modruvellir, he presented him with a great fur cloak, saying: “Now, herra, look at this payment for quarters, though it is less than you deserve.” And Gudmund made answer: “I thank thee for it. I have never received a better gift.” But in war, furs seemed to represent triumph and tribute, for “when Ogmund left Odd he went into Austrveg (eastern lands) and married the daughter of Gerirod the Jotun, and made all the kings in Austrveg pay tax to him; every twelve months they were to send him their lower and upper mustache.” From these Ogmund made himself a fur cloak which he wore as a sign of his authority. As a result of such traffic (and of piracy) King Harald Greycloak, or Greyskin, who in 970 himself visited Archangel, “gat exceeding wealth,” and he and his Viking brethren impressed their character upon the whole of Christendom. These, bear in mind, were the Dark Ages. For the Vikings, this darkness was about as disadvantageous as a midnight cellar is to a cat. But to the fearful and faithful, it was another matter.

These Vikings or Norsemen from beyond the Baltic, however they may have got there, seem to have split off in two directions, one group taking to the plunder of England and Scotland; the other pouring down the rivers of Russia to the Bosphorus. Thus did the frozen fastnesses of Hyperborea let loose upon the languid South a perfect avalanche of barbarism, scattering groups of "independent chieftains and desperate adventurers, who sighed in the laziness of peace, and smiled in the agonies of death." Scouring through the deep Russian forests, they glided down the Dvina, the Dneiper and the Volga exactly as the French *coueurs des bois* did in North America, heading for "Greece, where, instead of the skins of squirrels, silk and gold would be the recompense of their service." The silk-wearing, leisure-loving inhabitants of Constantinople were hardly congratulating themselves on the possible riddance of Rome, when the Russian-Scandinavians swarmed down upon them in the first attempt in history to break open for themselves an ice-free channel to the sea.

This happened in the year 865 A.D., the year after the founding of Novgorod by Ruric. The people of Constantinople were enjoying the mid-summer breezes that came cool and refreshing from over the Bosphorus. Their monarch, Michael, "the drunkard" was absent, and their minds in consequence were free from the usual vexations from his debauches. If any apprehension disturbed them it was from the possible attacks of Greek corsairs from the sea. The boundless steppes above them, blocked by the snow, the impenetrable forests and unnavigable cataracts, were far from their minds. Without a note of warning, a flotilla of two hundred canoes, crowded with a wild, fierce-looking army of savages, came into view, and before they had time to recall their dissolute monarch, they were no longer Romans, but Russians. "Who can resist God and the great Novgorod?"

When Michael returned, he gathered his patriarchs about him, they brought out the sacred garment of the Virgin Mary, and with it stirred the sea into a mighty tempest. The Russians, who had braved ten thousand perils in their descent upon Constantinople, saw their danger. Their boats were open, capable of carrying from

forty to seventy men, but their slender masts were not secure against a tempest. So they departed before the storms of the season set in, determined however, now that they had seen the luxury and delights of Byzantium, never to rest till the way was open to them.

During the next three centuries, these Russians (Rus was the name for Swede then) made several such journeys to the Golden Horn. In the depths of Russia they founded Wolodomir (Moscow), and following the course of the Borysthenes (the Dneiper), subjugating the numerous indigenous nomadic tribes, opened the trade routes to the sea.

Novgorod and Kiow, begun as two trading posts, became the scenes of lively commercial activity resembling great fairs. Russians (or Swedes), Norsemen (or Normans and Angles) gathered in great numbers, enriched by the steady accretion of furs—fox, beaver and squirrel skins—and even found themselves natives of the Sublime Port.

The pursuit of the fur trade sent the Russians, blocked in the Black Sea, blocked in the Baltic, onward across Siberia, in time there to be blocked by Japan.

§

While one division of Norsemen was moving south and east, and others were settling Normandy and harrying the coast of England, there were some daring souls who even went as far as Greenland, so named in the hope that “men would be the more readily persuaded thither if the land had a good name.” And thither sailed Eric the Red, because he had been outlawed on account of the number of killings he had committed, excessive even for a Viking. In this way America was discovered, and the first traffic in recorded history engaged in with the Amerind.

After reaching Greenland the Eric colony made a deliberate and studied attempt to reach land to the south which they vaguely called Vinland. Among the clan of Eric the Red at Brattahlid was a man by the name of Thorfinn Karlsefni, “being a man of great wealth” who had married Gudrid. Everybody in the little community, even Gudrid, urged Karlsefni to make a settlement

in Vinland, and he finally yielded. Sailing south, they entered a river, and found to their delight, that the streams and forests abounded in fish and game, grapes for wine, and wood for ship-building and shipment home.

They had hardly settled themselves for the winter when they received a strange and mysterious visitation. "Early one morning there came to them a fleet of skin-canoes," scouted about for a while and disappeared. When spring came, the visitation returned. "Thereupon Karlsefni and his people displayed their shields." The strange people, however, soon indicated that they came to barter, and displayed great bundles of skins of beaver and sables. Of this first trade with the American Indians we have a vivid picture from the saga of the Flat Island Book.

"A great troop of men came forth from out the woods. The cattle were hard by, and the bull began to bellow and roar with a great noise, whereat the Skrellings were frightened and ran away with their packs, wherein were gray furs, sables, and all kinds of peltries. They fled towards Karlsefni's dwelling, and sought to effect an entrance into the house, but Karlsefni caused the doors to be defended (against them). Neither (people) could understand the other's language. The Skrellings put down their bundles then, and loosed them, and offered their wares (for barter), and were especially anxious to exchange these for weapons, but Karlsefni forbade his men to sell their weapons, and taking counsel with himself, he bade the women carry out milk to the Skrellings, which they no sooner saw than they wanted to buy it, and nothing else. Now the outcome of the Skrellings' trading was, that they carried their wares away in their stomachs, while they left their packs and peltries behind with Karlsefni and his companions."

In such numbers had the natives come to traffic "that it was as if coals had been scattered broadcast out before the bay." Either the Skrellings soon got all the milk they wanted or the Vikings ran out of it, but the demand for something more tangible than milk was made in the next saga. The natives now called for cloth.

"In exchange for perfect unsullied skins," says the Eric Saga, "the Skrellings would take red stuff a span in length, which they

would bind round their heads. So their trade went on for a time, until Karlsefni and his people began to grow short of cloth, when they divided it into such narrow pieces that it was not more than a finger's breadth wide, but the Skrellings still continued to give just as much for this as before, or more."

When the natives cast their eyes upon the weapons of the Norsemen, Snorri and Karlsefni refused to sell. Things were apparently coming to a dangerous pass, when the bull let out his favorite bellow and the Skrellings took precipitately to the woods. How like the Vikings to carry roaring bulls and red cloth upon the same expedition!

The following winter the natives returned. This time trouble broke out, some natives were slain, and the Norsemen barricaded themselves for the winter. Discouraged and troubled, they determined to return to Greenland in spring. "They now made ready for the voyage and carried away with them much booty in vines, and grapes, and peltries." So ended the first venture in the American fur-trade.

It may be, that since the records from which this is drawn were written down some time in the fourteenth century, rumors and reports of a continent beyond the Atlantic filtered down into Europe and gave Columbus some inkling of the land to the west.

Meanwhile five hundred years went by. The trade routes to the east, kept open mainly for gold and gems and spices, brought bundles of pelts and reports of great stocks of furs into Venice from even the distant reaches of China. Carpini and Rubruquis, two traveling friars, commented enthusiastically upon the trade with no slight mention of the use of furs by the Russians and the Tartars. "In winter the Tartars," said Rubruquis, "always wore at least two robes of fur, and often a third; the innermost against the body, was of course the best and most valuable; the outer one would be of inferior fox, wolf, or even dog-skin." When Rubruquis came into the presence of the Great Khan, Mangu, he was "dressed in skin spotted and glossy like a seal." And the Khan gave them costly presents of furs to take back with them to Europe.

Marco Polo also referred frequently to the use of furs in the east, where "the wealthy Tartars dress in cloth of gold and silks, with skins of the sable, the ermine, and other animals, all in the richest fashion." He speaks of the plundering expeditions in which the Tartars engaged for the sake of ermines, martens and arcolini foxes found in the Polar Region of Darkness.

Such tales may apparently be forgotten, but they swell the stream of racial consciousness. With the fierce all-conquering Hyperboreans and the proud, disdainful Orientals teasing and luring the Hesperian realms of Europe, no wonder they turned to the regions beyond the Atlantic as to a new El Dorado.

CHAPTER IV

Royalty and Rustic

THE sojourn of Eric the Red passed unnoticed in Europe. But during the centuries that followed there appeared in Europe a new civilization. Intellectual and social life alike—the life of the spirit and the life of the body—were attaining to a development which had not been known since the barbarians crashed into the Roman Empire centuries before. But the new civilization of the late Middle Ages and the dawning Renaissance had characteristics curiously unlike those of the ancient world. Classical civilization had hated, feared, and despised the wilderness. Medieval civilization embraced it with reverence and a kind of reminiscent regard for what had belonged to the forest origins of the peoples who were now evolving the modern states of Europe. On the spiritual side this showed in the special love of the church for the wilderness, the sense of holiness and nearness to God in the forest recesses, which runs through early religious Latin, like a sweet strain of music. On the material side it showed in the passion for furs which seized all fashionable Europe, and which is not wholly explained by the value of skins as clothing.

Furs had, in addition to their obvious utility, that symbolical value which attaches to all material things which men pursue passionately, and beyond reason. Hence, arose, among other things, a curious alliance between religion and fur-trading, which later continued in the relations of the Jesuits and the fur-traders in North America, but which began with the development of great fur-trading centers in the territory of the Teutonic religious orders along the Baltic Sea.

Europe had only for a short space been out of the forests, but it looked on the purely urban civilization of the Mediterranean and turned away. The first millennium had barely listened to the mes-

sage of enlightened peace when hunger and pestilence began to flay the continent. Brigandage hovered at the gates of every castle and infested every fief. The wilderness had to be reclaimed not so much from savagery as from false human institutions.

Everywhere, during the earlier Middle Ages there had come upon men a "consuming thirst for the wilderness." Hermits cleared forests and pursued the ascetic life as an escape from the trials and uncertainties of a semi-lawless world. As an escape from the trivialities of their courts, lords and huntsmen crashed into the hermit's peace with revived savage lust for the boar or the bull, who, according to the tender annals of these saints, sought in the flimsy confines of their huts, safety and life. To many of the serfs also, the forests were freedom from village striving, but a freedom to which they were never permitted to escape. At length the Monk and the Knight brought some peace to the wilderness.

The tide of migration was turning. Savage Teuton and Gaul, having resisted the invasion of the still more savage Norseman, having themselves successfully penetrated the peninsula of Spain, now faced the wilderness again, this time to reclaim it and lay it under the restraint of husbandry. They had even gone further. They had sought to reclaim the tomb of Christ in a great Crusade. And after the subsidance of the Crusades, some pious merchants from Bremen and Leubeck started hospitals for the plague-ridden, and founded the Teutonic Order of Knighthood.

Lying on the seashore at Malta, some young knights fell to talking about their future, now that crusading was at an end. One of them suggested that they might win back the German lands from the heathen and carry the Cross to the Baltic. The suggestion set fire to the little group, and that fire was kept burning for centuries. For three centuries after their coming, the Teutonic knights drained the swamps and planted the seeds of husbandry and religion, and made safe for the merchants the trade routes far into the northeastern wilderness. They reared magnificent buildings and established aristocratic governments, and the buildings and the governments were fresh and solid down to our own times. Adam of Bremen describes these knights as "beyond dis-

pute the most humane of mankind, ever ready to assist shipwrecked mariners, setting little value on gold and silver, but much on their store of furs, and especially on their marten skins."

This Order of the Teutonic Knights, like the Jesuit Order in North America (but much more successfully) became the trail-blazer for the great frontier state, combining both political and ecclesiastical authority. Their quarters on the frontier of Russia were like great fortresses, similar to the forts of the French and the English fur companies in America, enclosed by walls and alive with men and watch-dogs by day and by night, against the ever imminent attacks from the more savage Russians. Under the ægis of this order, over sixty towns arose between 1233 and 1416, and dominated the inland trade from the Atlantic to the Volga. Slowly these Germans pressed down into Russia, colonizing on a scale comparable to the colonization of America by England and France. By the time of the discovery of America, these towns had formed themselves into the great Hanseatic League, which held a close monopoly over the fur trade, and in trying to root out competition from the Dutch, the Flemings, and the English, they inadvertently turned these peoples in the direction of America.

Novgorod was the last great outpost of the Hanseatic League. There traders gathered great quantities of peltries for the Hansa markets, which had come from the far interior of Russia and Siberia. Visby, on the island of Gotland in the Baltic, also became the rendezvous for merchants from all the Hanseatic towns from Cologne and Utrecht in the west, to Revel in the east. In this trade, kings and aristocrats played their part, while pirates and marauders plunged down upon them for priceless plunder. In such high esteem did some kings hold these skins, that King Valdemar Atterdag himself swooped down upon the town of Visby in 1360 and carried away all he could lay hold of. "We find in their books," says Helen Zimmern, "that these princes and aristocracy frequently owed them sums of furs, Flanders cloth, and choice wines." The energy and the enterprise of these frontier traders, dealing to a very great extent in furs, reanimated the whole commercial life of Europe.

In the garments of the day one may get a sense of the taste and the tendencies of its civilization. As peace spread over the wildernesses, troubador and cavalier put aside armor and mail for "the silks and brocades of the Orient and the furs of the north," while m'lady appeared in her gayly colored petticoats and skirts of Arras cloth trimmed with marten fur hardly reaching her knees, and her shapely calves sleek in red stockings above shoes of shining Morocco leather. Men brought back from war or from the great markets the newest fashions for patrician and bourgeoisie alike, and in these, furs played a leading part. A common costume for a man, from cap to foot, was one great stately mass of furs.

"They are plentiful as dung here," reported the pious chronicler, Adam of Bremen, adding, "for our damnation, as I believe, for *per fas et nefas* we strive as hard to come into the possession of a marten skin as if it were everlasting salvation."

Indeed, there was salvation and even material transmutation to many in this zeal for furs. Knights and crusaders became fur merchants, and fur merchants became nobles and pageanteers. The church might deplore the passion for furs, but the rulers passed laws restricting their use to the members of royalty only. And the caste of skinners in Germany, France and England entrenched itself behind walls of monopoly and steeped itself in baptisms of ritual and pools of opulence to the point where the mere name of their craft raised them upon pinnacles of social prestige. To this day some of the beautiful stained glass windows of the Cathedral at Chartres stand as the gift of the munificent company of furriers. The social heights to which furriers were able to climb from out of the very depths of the forests (resembling the achievements of a Ford or a Carnegie) have come into our folk-lore in the symbolism of Cinderella. For Cinderella's slipper was originally not of glass, but of *vair*, which, as Balzac explains in Catherine de Medici, was the rarest of costly furs, in the early times restricted by law to the use of the highest royalty. Through a printer's error *vair* was spelled *verre*, which means glass; but the magic that made little Cinderella a princess was fur, not glass.

And in Grimm's variant on the Cinderella story the little princess is clad in a mantle made of all the different kinds of fur in the world. And through that magic skin many a skinner had his name writ large in the annals of his land, pelletier becoming ennobled to Lepelletier, and the enlargement of an s turning him proudly into Skinner and the maker of the finest satins in America to-day.

In such high esteem were furs then held that by the fourteenth century, their use was regulated by legislation. In England, Edward III permitted only royalty, bishops, earls, barons, knights and ladies and "people of the Holy Church who might expend £100 of their benefices at the least" to wear them. "In France," says Balzac, "and in other kingdoms, not only was the use of furs restricted by law to the great nobility as is proved by the part played by ermine in ancient coats-of-arms; but certain rare furs, such as *vair*, which was beyond doubt imperial sable, might be worn only by kings, dukes, and men of high rank holding certain offices."

The King of England wore a crimson velvet surcoat and a long mantle fastened in front of the neck, ermine-lined, with a deep cape or tippet of ermine, and in 1446 peers' robes were furred with miniver. Doubtless, the reason for these restrictions lay in the scarcity of furs. Furs were neither common nor cheap, and "one long furred robe was valued 33s. 4d., and one short one, 26s." Indeed, so highly prized were they that they were generally preserved from generation to generation in the same family.

"A lady's outfit," Balzac assures us, "represented a vast sum of money; it was included in her fortune, and safely bestowed in those enormous chests which endanger the ceilings of modern houses. . . . The citizen's wife or the courtesan who, in our day, trims her cloak with sable, does not know that in 1440 a malignant constable of the watch would have taken her forthwith into custody, and hailed her before the judge at le Châtelet. The English ladies who are so fond of ermine are unconscious of the fact that formerly none but queens, duchesses, and the Chancellor of France were permitted to wear their royal fur."



*Sir George Simpson establishing his first Council of Settlers and
Half-breeds near Vancouver in 1835*

After the best skins had been reserved for the nobles the poorer grades were exported, for even these could not be sold to people of the lower classes. Not the severest restrictions, however, remain intact, and these, like our own prohibitions, were perpetually transgressed, to the enrichment of the fur-bootleggers of the time. It was to control the trade and prevent the cheapening of furs that garments were closely inspected to see that the laws for the use of furs were obeyed, and offenders were "set upon the pillory." The King of England, in 1327, issued a charter to a company of furriers under the title of "The Masters and Wardens, Brothers and Sisters of the Gild or Fraternity of the Skinners of London, to the honour of God and the precious body of our Lord Jesus Christ." Such guilds of furriers were thence to be found through France, and even in Florence, Italy. And the activities of the furrier began gradually to spread the taste for furs and undermine the limitations of class placed upon them.

"In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries," says Balzac, "the fur trade was one of the most flourishing industries. The difficulty of obtaining furs, which, coming from the North, necessitated long and dangerous voyages, gave a high value to skins and furriers' work. Then, as now, high prices led to demand, for vanity knows no obstacles." And their use worked its way down the scale of social life. Nevertheless, so highly prized were they still that bequests of furs in wills were as common as bequests of armor. A nobleman, or lady, every rich man as well as every citizen, possessed at most two dresses for each season, and they lasted a lifetime or more, and marriage contracts contained clauses relating to them as to any question of dowry. One Thomas Mussenden, Esq., in 1402, gave all to his wife except one bed covered with ermine. He gave to Richard Chamberlayne a long gown of scarlet, furred with red gray, and to Walter Coke a gown of russet without fur. In 1411, Joane, Lady Hungerford, bequeathed to the wife of her son Walter, her black mantle furred with miniver. Edward Duke of York left in 1415 among his servants "all his Hopolandes huykes not furred." And so on. But the exclusive

use of fur for royalty was passing, and even women of evil life who could not wear goods that were furred, were permitted to trim their clothes with rabbit skins.

At that time England was enjoying one of her most prosperous fur eras. Every section of Europe not blocked by Germany or Russia was being drained of its furs, and the increasing demand was stirring up rivalries fraught with great moment to the history of the world. For Europe was soon to turn its face westward, and not the least enticing objective lay in the need for furs; for in Europe the best of fauna had been exterminated.

Fifty years before Columbus, two Heralds, one of France and the other of England, carried on a verbal battle in regard to the comparative power and prestige of their separate countries. And when taunted by the French Herald about the wealth of France in cattle and wild life, the English Herald retorted: "Of the ryches of Bestiall in Englande. Sir heralde, where you say you have ryches of bestial in Fraunce, I say we have lykewise in Englande, and more plentie than you, as oexen, kyne, swyne, gootes, fitches, squerelles, whyte and blacke lambe, with other kyndes of furies."

From Samarkand to England, furs were now become the object of pride and envy, and Clavijo, the Spanish traveler who died in 1412, displays before the vision of Europe the sables and the marten skins which Chinese potentates gave each other as presents.

The arduous, hazardous, primitive life of the chase has at last softened to the more modish needs of civilization. Balzac makes the life of Catherine de Medici center in the life of the Syndic of the Furriers, the baronial head of the guild of furriers. In England, pageantry and drama frequently found form in the lavish public life of the Worshipful Company of Skinners. The wealthy fur maker and fur wearer caught the eye of Chaucer. These merchants in motley stuff, with beaver hat from Flanders, in a loose tunic lined with fur, or edged with fur at the neck, wrist and skirt, were a perpetual parade of the London streets. And Wyclyf

pictures the priest "in pompe and pride, coveitise and envye, with fatte hors, and bridelis ryngynge be (by) the weye and himself in costly clothes and pelure (fur)."

Vast, rich, and profuse were the functions at which the furriers gathered on festive occasions, a full life, vibrant with piety and paganism in goodly proportion. On holy days, the skinners, "male and female" always followed behind the most notable, and at the groaning banquet boards, set in separate apartments for men and women, amidst glittering plate and exquisite hangings, the fragrance of preserved Indian sandalwood mingling with the luscious aromas from the kitchen, lady Mayoresses, noblemen and reverend priors enacted, along with skinners and furriers the universal pageant of the alimentary canal. And when the feasting ended, the election of the Masters and Wardens of the Worshipful Company began, with "subtleties, so marvellously cunning wrought" telling "in allegory the history of the Company and of the Saviour as its patron." Officers enter with garlands on their heads accompanied by minstrels playing; are sworn in; and everything is made ready for the great pageant.

Poets and pageanteers have left us fulsome records of such events in England. One, M. Taubman, spared no pains to make it real and elaborate. The fly-leaf of his book contains the following:

"London's great jubilee restored and performed on Tuesday, October the 29, 1689. For the entertainment of the Right Honorable Sir Thos Pilkington, Knight, Lord Mayor of the city of London; containing a description of the several pageants and speeches, together with a song for the entertainment of their Majesties, who, with their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princesses of Denmark, the whole Court, and both houses of Parliament, honor his Lordship this year with their presence. All set forth at the proper costs and charges of the right worshipful Company of Skinners.

"By M. TAUBMAN. 4°. London, 1689."

The Worshipful Company had been in existence at that time for over three hundred years, and its wealth, now vastly increased from the furry resources of the continent of North America, had

placed it at the very fore-front of English guilds. Rightly did Taubman address himself with gusto to it in his acknowledgment.

"THE COMPANY OF SKINNERS.

"Right Worshipful,

"There is not a Company in this famous city (tho' yet more ancient) has arrived to the Dignity you have done: You have had the Honour to have Six Kings Members of your Society, and this year a King and Queen for your Royal Guests." And he ends with acknowledgements of "Your costly preparations, Prudent Contrivance, and bounteous Contributions toward so glorious an Entertainment.

"M. T."

By the side of the induction of these Master and Wardens, the inaugural of a President of the United States is a simple ceremony. Chariots, barges, and glittering halls where "nothing but gold and sapphire present themselves unto your view" with pendants flying, drums beating, trumpets sounding, music playing—all echoing from boat to boat on the Thames. The chariot "is carry'd by a Panther and Sable, which are the supporters of the Right Worshipful Company of Skinners." Their ensign bears the ermine, with the panther at the crest. "On the Panther is mounted a Figure Representing *Wisdom* (because of his greater subtlety than that of the Lion). On the Sable is placed *Government* because the sable is the distinction of Honour by their Ermin, and those persons of Honour so distinguished (Not by their Merits only) are the People to whom the Government is generally committed."

Then comes the scene of Mirth and Jollity, called the Company's pageant, in which strange figures and shapes represent the mystery of their craft. The scene is a spacious wilderness, studded with various trees, haunted and inhabited with all manner of beasts, which are tossed up now and then and fall upon the heads of the worshipful of the company to their great delight. And the day wears on to morning, with drinking and gourman-dizing and songs whose meaning never sought to convey the niceties of civilization. For other times and more mystic celebrations, the Worshipful Company maintained an estate in Ireland called "The Manor of Pellipar" where the "skinning" was of a

more esoteric nature yet. Thus man is ever trying to escape realities, only to recreate them in drama and to instill into them mystic significance. Out of the wilderness came the fur-wearers, turned Crusaders in revulsion against civilization, reclaimed the wilderness when crusading was at an end, clothed themselves in the garments of the wilds, and then in sport, and drama and religion, invested their culture with the spirit of the wilderness. And even the discoverer of the simple process of making felt from hair in time becomes canonized as St. Clement.

BOOK TWO
AMERICAN FOREGROUNDS

CHAPTER V

Fishermen Catch a Continent

WHILE the huntsman was whacking his way through the wilds of Europe, conquering, trading, carousing, the lonely fisherman was rocking upon the billows of the sea, womanless, cargoless, with only fish for victim. That strange conventionalizing of the detail of life—that tendency to make what a man eats and drinks and wears a symbol of something else, which the church imposed on Europe, introduced into the settlement of America another element, a universal desire to find new fishing grounds. The wearing of furs was sanctioned by fashion; but the eating of fish on Friday was enjoined by God. For the sake of all the souls in Christendom there must be fish, and more and more of it. If the waters about Europe did not yield food enough for salvation, then it was obviously the duty of the faithful to go in search of it somewhere else.

Though man has always been more or less of a fisher, and Roman feasters are said to have expended fabulous sums on the meat in a perverse desire to luxuriate in the unobtainable, fishing and fish-eating has nevertheless remained essentially the mainstay of the impecunious. Fur is the garment of rank and fashion; fish is the staple of the poor and the penitent. The man who goes hunting strides forth with pride in his manhood; the man who goes fishing jokes, smiles shyly, and slips away. And yet the meekest and bravest of all men was the greatest of fishers. The Monk who guides you through the Catacombs near Rome still points to the fish that were graved upon the tunnel walls, explaining that if you join the first letters of the five Greek words *Iesus CHristos THEu Yios Soter* which mean Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour, they will make the word ICHTHYS, the Greek

word for fish. And he adds that thus "the word Christ is mystically understood, because He was able to live, that is, to exist, without sin in the abyss of this mortality as in the depth of waters."

The early Church, having married My Lady Poverty, seeking the souls of the poor for salvation, took the fish for its symbol. The poor did not need to drive themselves to the cultivation of a taste for fish. And since the church for over three hundred years was the church of the poor, it sought by an ambivalent decree to exalt these poor, and humble the rich. All of the faithful were to eat fish on Friday, for Christ, the Fisherman, died on Friday. And as the centuries drove the habit deeper and deeper into the heart of Europe, it inflated the demand for fish, and cast out the terrors of the deep and opened the way for the exploration and discovery of the world. It is said that Rome went to Britain for an oyster, but the taste for fish once established, Britain swallowed the Church of Rome with its consumption of fish, and has prayed, ever since:

"I will cast down my hook:
The first fish which I bring up
In the name of Christ, King of the Elements,
The poor man shall have for his need:
And the King of the Fishers, the brave Peter,
He will after it give me his blessing."

By the end of the Middle Ages, nearly half of every year consisted of fast days which were really fish days, so wide had become the custom of eating fish as a religious observance. In view of this fact, says Radcliffe, "the situation of twenty Sees (two Arch-bishoprics and eighteen Bishoprics) out of twenty-seven on what were then salmon rivers can hardly have been a geographical accident." And all the seaport towns of England were once enjoined by law to provide the king's household with the great quantities of herrings that went into his favorite pies. During the siege of Orleans, the French and the English fought what became known as the Battle of the Herrings, instigated by the English as a decoy battle to make possible the shipment of herrings for the soldiers who would otherwise have been reduced to starvation with

quantities of other meats at hand, so rigorous had become the habit of obeying the injunction against eating meat during Lent.

By the time the Protestant Reformation began to introduce doubts about the religious virtue of fish-eating, the habit could not be disturbed without almost wrecking the economic structure of Europe. As early as 1549, Edward VI, admitted by edict that, while "due and godly abstinence from flesh is a means to virtue," it was not to be lost sight of that at the same time "by the eating of fish much flesh is saved to the country" besides ministering to the interests of the fishing industries.

But what can one do with man? Violations of the laws against slaughtering during Lent became more frequent and more open, while the fisheries were going to pieces. Fines and punishments by imprisonment for not eating more fish only created a complex against eating it at all. Sir William Cecil, the piscatory Volstead of the time, left behind him a little unpublished confession: "Because no person should misjudge the intent of the statute which is politically meant only for the increase of fishermen and mariners, and not for any superstition for choice of meats; whoever shall preach or teach that eating of fish or forbearing of flesh is for the saving of the soul of man, or for the service of God, shall be punished as the spreader of false news."

In spite of this, the "bootlegging" of meat during Lent went on, as evidenced by the "Pussyfoot Johnson" of the time, John Taylor, who, in his "Jack a Lent" wrote: "I have often noted that if any superfluous feasting or gormandizing, paunch-cramming assembly do meet, it is so ordered that it must be either in Lent, upon a Friday, or a fasting: for the meat does not relish well except it be sauced with disobedience and contempt of authority."

The need of fish had become so fixed in the ritual and diet of Europe that trading companies and guilds, backed by the governments, began to assume control over the traffic which was disturbing the balance of power here and there. Eric Menved, King of Denmark, had lived so riotously that he was forced to dispose of all his herring fisheries to the Hansa traders and was

driven to begging permission to dip his nets for at least one day a year to keep fresh the memory of that delicious herring; and the Hansa merchants kept armed boats to enforce these regulations. Some sort of control had to be devised to prevent the exhaustion of the fisheries. The Hanseatic Diet ruled that none of their ships should sail from their harbors between Martinmass and Candlemass, except to fish for herrings to provide food during Lent.

Some means had to be discovered for the preservation of fish. Holland found it, and wealth came pouring into the coffers of the Dutch in consequence, so that a chronicler, Sir Francis Popham, was forced to exclaim: "But who doth not know that the poore Hollanders, chiefly by fishing, at a great charge and labour in all weathers in the open sea, are made a people so hardy, and industrious, and by venting this poore commodity to the Easterlings for as meane . . . are so mighty, strong and rich, as no State but Venice, of twice their magnitude, is so well furnished with so many faire Cities, goodly Townes, strong Fortresses, and that abundance of shipping and all sorts of marchandize, as well of Golde, Silver, Velvets, and Cloth of golde; . . . What Voyages and Discoveries, East and West, North and South, yea about the world, make they? What an Army by Sea and Land, have they long maintained in despite of one of the greatest Princes of the world? And never could the Spaniard with all his Mynes of golde and Silver pay his debts, his friends, and army, halfe so truly, as the Hollanders stil have done by this contemptible trade of fish. Divers (I know) may alledge, many other assistances: but this is their Myne; and the Sea the source of those silvered streams of all their vertue; which hath made them now the very miracle of industrie, the pattern of perfection for these affairs: and the benefit of fishing is that *Primum mobile* that turns all their Spheres to this height of plentie, strength, honour and admiration." But the Dutch began salting down herring even when still alive and soon exhausted their supply, and the wily little fishes moved themselves off for happier caves of ocean.

To bring the industry under some control, the Fishmonger's

Guild was formed in England before the tenth century, and it maintained a monopoly with charters from each successive monarch. But strife and envy grew apace even between the salt-fish mongers and the stock-fish mongers, and piscatorial combats profuse with billingsgate made infamous their profession. And the fishers kept creeping further and further overseas, and newer and ever more new fishing grounds had to be found, to appease the herring hunger of Europe.

When these fishermen first took to the distant reaches beyond the Atlantic, and how far they actually sailed, will perhaps never be determined. A statement by a French Cosmographer, oriental scholar and mystic, Guillaume Postel, asserts that Newfoundland had been visited by the French before Columbus. Said Postel: "This land by reason of its most bounteous stores of fish has from our earliest written records been regularly visited by the Gauls, and has been frequented for the last 1600 years, but is disdained because it is deserted and cityless." This statement was first quoted by Marc Lescarbot, the historian who came here with Champlain, but neither Postel's "written records" nor Lescarbot's sources have been found. Nevertheless, when in 1624, the Basque fishermen of St. Jean de Luz contested with the Montmorency Company for their rights to fish at Newfoundland, they alleged in defense of their claims that "It is more than three centuries since the inhabitants (of St. Jean de Luz) discovered Newfoundland, and by their own efforts with a great loss of ships and men, this fishery was established, and the traffic permitted."

Three centuries before 1624 brings one back to the discovery and introduction of the mariner's compass, and antedates Columbus by a hundred and fifty years. And even Columbus intimates that when he started westward there had hitherto been "no certain evidence" that anyone had gone that way before, which suggests that rumor had it that there had been. And when in 1497 John Cabot came to North America he found current among the Indians the word for cod-fish, *baccalaos*, which, while not a Basque word, was used by them and could hardly have gotten to the Amerinds except through previous contact with the Basques. The

creed that imposed a diet of fish so that man might through abstinence see spiritual truth had unwittingly forced a break through the mists of ocean and revealed a brand new material world.

The Basques led the way to American settlement by fishing in Newfoundland, if not by actually knowing America before Columbus discovered it. Certainly by 1500 they were already making the Banks their home. "St. Jean de Luz," says Joseph Nogaret ("Saint Jean de Luz," Bayonne, 1925, pp. 157-8), "was born of the sea, has lived by the sea and has been on the point of perishing by the sea." From 1300 to 1600 A.D. it was one of the leading fishing ports of southern France. Its fishermen were the first in all the northern Atlantic waters, and formed the most fluent elements in the make-up of southern Europe. The Basques are an adventurous race. Even the Pyrenees were hardly able to confine them, and their easy ways amidst the crags and passes were the scourge of Saracen and French and the determining factor in the present political status of Europe. There was something in the nature of the Basque most particularly suited to the mobile life of America.

All up and down the ragged coast of Europe there are old fishing towns like St. Malo and St. Jean de Luz—hamlets from which great navigators, with their murderous crews, dropped off into the unknown seas. But apart from the isolated captains and explorers who set out to discover and nothing else, there were shoals of ordinary sea-faring folks who slipped from the western ports for the deep-sea fisheries. These were towns that lived over half in the sea anyway, and those of their folk who labored in the deep were an indestructible lot of men. The patience, gambling with the last cent, so to speak, the last cent being one's own unpampered body, which is staked against the chance throw of the elements, the isolation from great gatherings and being forced to live for long periods intensively with a few men, and possibly being cast adrift alone, the dipping not merely into distant oceans and bringing back strange fishes, but tapping a strange continent and bringing back new notions—all this made of the fisherman a type apart from the mass. Even his wife who remained behind had to learn

to live and run her life without the usual protections. Thus this dual process of natural selection made of fishing folk the artless forerunners of civilization, and their villages, perched upon the craggy shores, served admirably as a take-off field for exploration.

The intelligent traveler and the intelligent historian both see the same things. Columbus and Cartier, as they passed up and down the coast of France and Spain saw what the average tourist to-day sees who passes along the coast of France and Spain. Fishing smacks hovered about the waters of Plymouth, Cherbourg, Dieppe, St. Malo and St. Jean de Luz then as they do now; and most of the little towns, ancient within their coves or parapets, have altered little the pelagic quality of their minds and their markets. St. Malo, for all its pleasing little modernities, the trinkets and the flashing stores, the jollity and eager pursuit of earning a living, for all its moods is still impervious to change. The tides rise and fall about Europe, but its life is bound. There is stir, but no flowing; no change, but only escape.

It was from St. Malo that most of the fishermen, navigators, and explorers usually left for the new world; St. Malo whose foundations, like those of New York, are rocks within the sea. It is linked with the continent by an artificial causeway a quarter of a mile in length, and all trains stop outside its gated ramparts. From niches in the dilapidated fences along the way one catches glimpses here and there of the masts of fishing vessels that are and nearly always have been the symbol and the substance of Malouin power. St. Malo's wealth was "dragged up hither from the sea," for when piracy came to an end they simply concentrated on fishing.

Fishing smacks and trawlers still come in regularly from the Banks of Newfoundland, as they have done from the days of Columbus; and many a Malouin sailor turned trapper when he reached those distant shores, and they remain as visible samples of the types out of which the French adventurers in America were made. From the turrets of the ramparts one may, in a lull, catch the droning sound of fishermen who count each separate fish as it emerges from the hold, dandruffed with salt. There along the

canal stand a hundred vessels, no longer disturbed by ocean swells, no longer lonely between sea and sky. Now the fish come up no longer from dripping depths of freedom, but from a hatchway five feet square and a bottom as defined as a basket. They come, not by chance, but by a chain-like process in which no man moves an inch, but simply passes fish after fish from hand to hand. While the boat is still buoyant, its ribs are congested with an immovable mass of flat things that soon get their numbers for but a passing second and merge into pounds on the antique scale. From this crude, old-fashioned balance, with trays of wood about four feet square, they pass into a freight car—and then they are in Europe.

And what of the men? Here they become stevedores, short, gnarled, corroded in hand and face by the salt in the spray and the salt packing in the fish, but with something in their memories that makes the years at sea commensurate in joy with the days at home. One squat, square, sunburnt captain told me it was his fifty-ninth year in Newfoundland. It would be his last, for he wanted to end his days at St. Malo. Like Cartier he had had enough of the sea. One of these sons of St. Malo raised a goodly portion of the money for the statue of Cartier standing there, by singing in the streets. The memory of the Malouin is long, and his pride is great, and he has not forgotten that Cartier not only went further than most Malouins and found the St. Lawrence, but, as M. Dupont, their living historian told me, he was the father of a hundred children all of whom were baptized in the very church where he knelt before sailing to the New World.

And what of the women? At every ship there was at least one woman helper. Sometimes fair, young and good-looking, but generally as hardy as the men and as capable. One, with delicate hands reddened by the salt, and long, blond hair, tied in a knot, likewise spattered with salt and scales, stood apparently content with her lot, handing out fish to the weigher. Back within the walls of St. Malo is many another, laboring faithfully while the fisherman-husband is on the Banks for his six months of fishing.

One was running a little inn to make money enough to be able to move across the seas to St. Pierre so that she may be with him all the year round.

For over four hundred years this has been the tug-of-war that St. Malo has played with the sea.

I have dwelt so long upon St. Malo because it retains its original character much more than some of the other coast towns that from Columbus down have shared in the pelagic exploitation of Newfoundland and the fur-fields of North America. From Bayonne to San Sebastian in Spain, from Bristol to Luzon, the people are essentially fishermen. One of the most general pictures to be found between Bayonne and Luzon among the old prints is that of long-bodied, long-skirted, long-armed women in bare feet carrying upon their heads flat wicker trays full of fish.

The significance of this early fishing industry is still to be felt in the annual blessing of the fishing vessels at St. Malo before they set out for America. The frost has hardly gone from the air when St. Malo commences preparations for the blessing of these smacks which before the spring will come will spread their sails for the Banks of Newfoundland for six months of fishing.

Ten thousand people from all the districts about St. Malo crowd into the little walled-in town to witness this celebration. Apprehension of rain clouds the spirit of these visitors, and if the rainy season is too long, thoughts of the end of the world shroud their plans. Nevertheless, booths groan with trinkets for the body and the soul, and medals exalting the sailors or pictures to cheer their loved ones left behind, bedeck the stands that emerge like spring flowers beneath the coverings of winter.

There is to be this going down to the sea in ships. The vessels are ablaze with flags and bunting from keel to gallant mast, gayly waiting for the benediction. As soon as the Sunday sun is up, the crowds fill the piers, everywhere making room for the sailors and their kin. The sailors appear in their neatest, their wives and children in their best,—shipwrights, cooks, mascots,

captains (tamed corsairs all), supreme for the moment—for this one day at least the superiors of judges, mayors and prelates who come to bless and pay homage to their profession. And well they might, for what would St. Malo be—now so gay and refulgent with flags and flowers and bands of music under the eaves of the Cathedral—without the labor and the courage of these fishermen?

The Priest: "God has given men power over the fishes of the sea."

The Sailor: "But the dominion is a hazardous one, a blank check that may not be honored or overdrawn."

The Priest: "God will help you dear sons, and your families also; moral comfort will come to you through the letters of your dear wives and the kind words of your chaplains."

The voice of Chateaubriand: "As long as the race of fishermen will last on our shores we need not fear the perversion of foreign contacts."

The sailors, echoing the voices of their corsair forbears when they assaulted a foreign ship, crying: "God wishes it, God wishes it."

The procession now starts for the quay. A special boat takes the cardinal and the mayor, the judges and presidents of societies, directors of banks and town councilors out to the fishing craft. Slowly they glide past the ninety little vessels, while each receives the benediction. Soft strains of music trail along in the wake of the tender.

Back at the *Hôtel de France et de Chateaubriand*, the officials regale themselves with banquet and oratory, while all through the town, far into the night, dancing and drinking help the deserted ones to forget. At last all merry-makers find rest and comfort in warm beds.

But these toilers of the sea weigh anchor at the very hour when their kin are in their heaviest slumber, and float out upon the sea as they have done from the dawn of history—and for the five hundred years of the city-life of St. Malo. It was largely

the only escape for Europeans from the monotony of life within the granite walls and from the hard confinement of feudalism. For centuries before Europe would even consider moving over to America, these Malouins, these Basques, these Britons, and the Vikings, went quietly across to Newfoundland for fish. They went as hard little groups, jealous of each other, secretive, mysterious. Slowly they were ripping off the hard restrictions that like remora had fastened themselves upon the life of the people from the time the barbarian first sapped the strength of Rome, and curdled Europe into little national lumps called France, Spain, Holland, England.

As one stands before the stone slab in the Cathedral at St. Malo, France, marking the spot where Cartier knelt before leaving on that journey of discovery in which he found the St. Lawrence River, one catches a glint of what he must have felt—himself a thing of life and sentient being in a world of unknown territories. All around him were the solid walls of the cathedral, and around the cathedral were the thick stone walls of the corsair dwellings and around them all were the massive ramparts wide enough for three motor-cars to run abreast upon. It must have been a comfort to him to be for one short moment secure within this vast masonry knowing that soon he would be tossing upon a world in which he counted for very little indeed.

Forty years after Columbus there were fully 150 French vessels alone regularly employed in fishing on the Grand Banks, besides some 200 others and thirty Biscayan whalers. During these forty years Cartier was growing up, like all Bretons, on the stories of life overseas. He was born the year before Columbus discovered America, and in 1535 he left St. Malo to carve in that continent a niche for himself that was twenty miles wide and 2,100 miles long, and which he named the St. Lawrence. Brought up on fabulous tales of fishes, he was prepared for anything, and found there "divers fish shaped like horses, which at night take to the land, and by day to the sea." There is the tone and wide-

eyed quality of myth in his narration, and something extremely human in the personality of the man telling it. He ceases to be the inflated captain, explorer and discoverer we read about, and reveals himself a simple man, busy building a little fort, sailing up and down the river in small craft, picking up a few pelts here and there, and, with the showmanship of Barnum, absconding with a few samples of savage Indians with which to astound a superstitious, though unbelieving, world. And he returns to St. Malo to gather new forces, and perhaps to leave another child, born out of wedlock, to be christened in the dark vault of the Cathedral now marked by a slab to indicate the spot where he knelt before setting out on the journey on which he discovered the St. Lawrence.

Though during his life fishermen had constantly frequented the region, none had gone nearer than the outer coast of America, where they had dried their fish in huts in preparation for European markets. Now Cartier had opened to them a new world of strange wonders and great promise. He had found in the mouth of the St. Lawrence the white whale, which he described as "porporses, as white as any snow, their bodies and head fashioned as a greyhound they are wont alwaies to abide betwene the fresh and salt water, which beginneth betweene the river of Saguenay and Canada." Wherever he moved he reported great quantities of fish, and while they remained at anchor for an hour they took over a hundred cod.

Thereafter every seaman and explorer who chanced to come across the sea made Newfoundland a stopping place for stocking up on fish, or, if contrary winds delayed him, prayed that he might reach the grounds before starvation overtook them. Sir Humphrey Gilbert, half a century after Cartier, told of the great number of French and Portugese fishing smacks he saw there, and the manner of their fishing. "A man shall know without sounding when he is upon the banke," he said, "by the incredible multitude of sea foule hovering over the same, to prey upon the offalles and farbish of fish throwen out by fishermen, and floting upon the sea."

Still, none but fishermen visited the coast, and Cartier's enterprise came to naught. Seventy-five years went by, and the new world heard little of the flapping sails and the rasping voices of the fishermen who hovered outside its gates. When at the beginning of the next century, Champlain set out to make permanent the claims of France in the new world, he found a French-Basque fisherman, Savalet by name who for forty years had gone back and forth forty times between Europe and the Grand Banks. Yet the fish were as numerous as ever. Lescarbot, historian and poet, who came over with Champlain, wrote with a touch of humor: "As for fish, the same Champdore told us that they would put the kettle on the fire and catch enough fish for dinner before the water was hot." For all its abundance, fish was a wholesome and welcomed respite from bully-beef, and gave the French chef scope for his genius. "Those occupied neither with cod nor with birds," says Lescarbot, "passed their time in gathering the hearts, tripes and the most delicate portion of the inwards of the said cod-fish, which they hashed small with bacon spice and the flesh of the said cod, whereof they made as good white puddings as could be made in Paris, and we ate of them with right good will."

So long as the continent was unexplored, the fishermen were content to rear their little crude huts upon the shores where they dried their fish for final transportation to Europe. To these huts, Indians came to traffic in furs for fish and trifles, and when these luxurious furs began to be seen upon the streets of St. Malo, they aroused the commercial cupidity of the people. More and more the trade possibilities of the northern sections of the continent began to loom up before them. Fishermen began to desert their nets for the more lucrative trade with the Indians. Soon the fur trade aroused French merchants with dreams of wealth and empire overseas, and they secured from the king monopolistic patents for the development and settlement of America.

One of the first of these was the Marquis de La Roche. But when he set out to execute his rights he found the fishermen who had long enjoyed a petty traffic in furs as his worst opponents.

The Malouins backed up the fishermen in this opposition, and his rights were revoked. Long before the Pilgrims and the Puritans arrived, Lescarbot, the Parisian lawyer who forsook France for America, wrote (in 1606): "Strangers 'dazzle us' with ready-made riches as though Old France had not treasures: which are also the treasures to be hoped for from your new France, our nearer neighbor, who even as she has long time supported by her fish the whole of Europe alike on sea and on land, and giveth to us her furs, wherefrom our Newfoundlanders and traders draw good profit."

When shortly after the Sieur de Monts tried to found a colony in America, he also found the fishermen antagonistic to him. Throughout the ports of France they had set up a protest, claiming that he was undermining their fisheries, when as a matter of fact, he was undermining their petty fur-traffic. And inasmuch as at that time fish was vastly more important to France than the small fur trade, the fishermen won out, and de Monts' privileges were withdrawn. But the day of their supremacy was drawing to a close, for other forces and other projects were slowly unraveling the mysteries of the new continent, and furs were destined to supplant fishes in the affections of profit-seeking Europe.

Meanwhile, England, struggling with poverty and no outlet, was looking about for a foothold in the new world. There chanced to be a member of a British embassy to France, a gentleman of the name of Hakluyt, who busied himself gathering all the information he could about French and Spanish explorations in America. To this day, Hakluyt's "Voyages" remains one of the most valuable sources of information anent the period, and enthusiasts have said that to him "England is more indebted for its American possessions than to any man of that age." Hakluyt, fully aware of the fishing industries that through England were largely stocking the markets of Europe, saw in them a further means to the expansion of the British Empire. Suggesting in 1580 that search be made for a northwest passage to Cathay, he adds: "Respect of fish and certaine other things.—And if the aire may be found upon that tract temperate, and the soil yeelding wood,

water, land and grasse, and the seas fish, then we may plant on that maine the offals of our people, as the Portingals do in Brassill, and so they may in our fishing, in our passage, and divers wayes yeelede commoditie to England by harbouring and victualling us."

The year was a trying one. Poverty was staring England in the face, and idleness was rampant, and the efforts of the Queen and her ministers failed to satisfy those who saw in America an escape and a promise. A certain Robert Hitchcock saw in the Newfoundland fisheries the only solution to the problem, and he wrote a book about it which he called "Pollitique Platt" in the Foreword to which he explained that it was "A Pollitique Platt for the honour of the Prince, the great profite of the publique State, relief of the Poore, perseruation of the riche, reformation of Roges and Idle persones, and the wealthe of thousandes that knowes not howe to Liue." Ships, just a few hundred ships, manned with ten thousand men, and cast into the waters of Newfoundland for the herring fisheries would not only drain off the idle and increase the wealth of the rich, but would take from France and Holland an industry otherwise detrimental to the welfare of England. Forty men, claimed Hitchcock, each advancing fifty pounds sterling, would make the project workable. "The Burgesses of all the stately Porte tounes of England and Wales" whom he had dine with him at Westminster, all approved his scheme, and urged that Parliament be called to discuss it, offering themselves to furnish the money for the ships. Their motives were undisguised. ". . . other some saied, it were good to give a subsidie for this purpose, to shippe these kinde of people in this sorte, for if they should never retourne, and so auoided, the land were happie, for it is but riddaunce of a number of idle and euil disposed people."

The idle increased even as the hunger for cod grew apace. Report after report reached England of the enormous quantity of fish being caught off the Banks of Newfoundland and even from about the waters of Virginia, yet England had no port in America to which her fishermen could go for safe-harbor or repairs.

Peckham, Captain Bartholomew Gosnold, Captain Gilbert, Brereton, Rosier in their "Briefe and True Relations" gave glowing accounts of the extent of these fisheries during the next quarter century. Rosier found it all so startling that he declared that "To amplifie this with words, were to adde light to the Sunne." He saw in Virginia even greater returns in fish than from Newfoundland, "the fish being so much greater, better fed, and abundant with traine (oil)" samples of which had been brought to England for gifts to friends and as testimony of the truth of these assertions.

When, at the time of the sailing of the Pilgrims, trouble was brewing in and about the waters of Newfoundland, the British Admiralty sent out one Richard Whitbourne to make an investigation, and his report still remains in the British Museum, a quaint, discolored little volume, full to the brim with news of the fishing. Whitbourne also finds words failing him in telling of the cod-fishing, "by which our Nation and many other Countries are enricht and greatly comforted. And if I should here set down a valuation of that fish, which the French, Biscaines, and Portugals fetch yearly from this Coast . . . It would seem incredible, yea, some men are of opinion, that the people of France, Spain, Portugal and Italy could not so well live, if the benefit of this fishing upon that Coast, and your Majesties other Dominions, were taken from them."

And so it seems that the first English settlers in America sought not only the freedom to pray to God but to prey on cod in their own way. When at last the Massachusetts colony was formed, special provision was made for the prosecution of the fishing industries, and "Cod was graded for the various markets. The first grade 'merchantable' was sent to all parts of the world, but chiefly to the Catholic countries of Europe; 'middlings' was consumed principally at home; and the lowest grade, 'refuse' was exported to the West Indies for consumption by the slaves."

In the century and a half that followed, it was the fishing industry that kept the maritime colonies on their feet. What with wood for ships in plenty, and more than enough of deep-sea till-

age for cargo, and furs in unlimited store wild within the woods, the growth of America could not for long be curtailed. And when England ripped Newfoundland away from France, St. Jean de Luz died of starvation; and when the Revolution snapped the ties of New England and Newfoundland, the loyalist, Phineas Bond of Philadelphia, gloated over the serious effect it had upon the New England fisheries which he said had been "the only staple they possessed and that an adventitious one." In Canada, the Scotch Seigneur, Nairne, likewise gloried in the fact that the Revolution had cut off the States from the richest of the fur-fields, but his glee was dimmed by the fact that the French who, with the Indians, had always speared salmon in the St. Lawrence by lantern, defied him, and with roaring and bellowing, with torches still aflame, fished through the nights and through the years almost as though the privilege were an ancestral heritage.

It was. To the Americans, fishing had become one of the main sources of life, and the inimitable Burke, stirring Parliament to reason, gave it one of its most potent reasons for hardening its heart as God hardened the heart of Job.

"No sea but what is vexed by their fisheries. No climate that is not witness to their toils. Neither the perseverance of Holland, nor the dexterous and firm sagacity of English enterprise, ever carried this most perilous mode of hardy industry to the extent to which it has been pursued by these recent people:—a people who are still as it were but the gristle and not yet hardened into the bone of manhood."

Inversely, the world has converged upon the toils of the fishermen, toils that find no restraint either in the frozen fastness of the polar regions, nor the fagging languor of the tropics. The need of fish and the taste for fish keeps many a man otherwise slothful in an easy indolence. Yet with its non-resistance and its fluent waywardness, it laid a whole continent at the disposal of an underdeveloped peninsula.

CHAPTER VI

Route to China Beset by Beavers

HISTORY is strangely silent on the century of stir and bustle which enlivened the foggy banks of Newfoundland before the first successful settlements in America. It was a century in which far-eyed seamen stalked the wastes of ocean, with only half a dozen renowned visits to the mainland. The eyes of Europe were not focused on our continent; they were strained to the reaches beyond it, where lay the enticing riches of Asia, and such commanders as with great good fortune found patrons for their adventures were ordered to strike out a safe and speedy route to China. And so they bumped their prows against the rocky northern coasts, and went on, deeming three thousand miles of woodland as fit empire for the beasts, but not for man.

There is much criticism of the yellow-journalist for spreading his crime news in broad black letters on the front page. And yet the most sober historians fall into the identical errors. The discoveries of a few captains and the activities of a few kings become the outstanding features of their stories, while the incalculable contributions of hundreds of quiet toilers in the deep receive barely an honorable mention. In the history of America, therefore, the work of the fishermen has been thrust aside, although it was their slow and persistent propaganda that gradually broke down the apathy of Europe in matters pertaining to the exploration of America.

As to the grand and glorious kings of Europe, whose high-sounding charters and all-inclusive grants give the impression of lofty statesmanship and visions of empire—they never wrote them. They were too preoccupied with cutting each other's throats to work out any real policies for the sober utilization of North

America, and were willing to sacrifice nothing more than a few of their unfortunate criminals in the prospect. Amidst the black clouds of war that hung over Europe, there was only one ray of promise—China. Staunch men gave their lives to the labor of making known the new world, but received niggardly assistance only when they waved the magic wand—Cathay.

Though the fishermen had pointed the way to economic salvation through the Indians, the oriental obsession made all patrons of exploration blind to the intermediate possibilities. And they who failed to obtain either gold or China met with cold receptions upon their return. The scheme of transplanting impoverished subjects with the idea of subsidizing them while they subdued the wilderness was far from the minds of European rulers and statesmen. Their one idea was profit—and empire was merely the manifestation of ego-centric compensations for the complex of inferiority. And so almost every attempt at colonizing America originated in the mind of some simple dreamer or some group of rebels who paid for the privilege to suffer and risk their lives with promises of great gains to their royal patrons. The explorers, the Jesuits, the Puritans, the social dreamers from Lord Selkirk to Robert Owen, all received only meaningless grants from their governments, grants that were sometimes undermined by counter grants to monopolists. But even these monopolists who saw in the wilderness of America enormous wealth were generally idealists beside the kings who with an easy conscience gave and took back grants and privileges they never had a right to hold.

Reports had been pouring into Europe of the great quantities of furs that might be got from the Indians for mere trifles. "We exchanged our tinne dish for twentie skinnes, woorth twentie Crownes, or twentie Nobles: and a copper kettle for fiftie skins woorth fiftie Crownes." Over and over again such amazing tales were recorded in the logs of sea captains, and soon this became the central theme of all melodies played before the disconsolate Sauls whose exchequers were always depleted, always wasted on wars and edacious eating. And in time this began to supplant the dream of reaching China. Every explorer, every navigator who

wished to justify himself in the eyes of his patrons referred to the great profit to be found in the trade in furs, showing the eagerness with which the natives everywhere met the slightest product of European civilization. And while the dream of reaching China persisted down to the nineteenth century, the immediate costs for furthering that end came from the beaver trade.

There was needed, however, not only a prospect but a motive; the lure was enticing enough, but it required zeal to sustain it. Naught could be found more effective than the salvation of the savage. In this the French took the lead.

"When America was first made known to Europe," says Parkman, "the part assumed by France on the borders of that new world was peculiar and is little recognized. While the Spaniard roamed sea and land, burning for achievement, red-hot with bigotry and avarice, and while England, with soberer steps and less dazzling result, followed in the path of discovery and gold-hunting, it was from France that those barbarous shores first learned to serve the ends of peaceful commercial industry."

Among the first to lay aside the dreams of Cathay and ready gold for the hairy prospect of the forests was Aymar de Chastes, the Governor of the port of Dieppe. Gray-haired and sated with the follies of worldly strife by a life-time of immersion in civil wars, de Chastes was ready to employ his influence at Court in unselfish devotion to religious matters in a savage world. From Henry of Navarre, the bear-hunter of the Pyrenees, he secured the monopoly of the fur-trade in North America, and with that little purse in hand he farmed out his privileges to those who would further his designs for the conversion of the savages. And in this he found a most faithful ally and commander, also a veteran of those wars and a favorite of the King of France; a man restless for the wide seas and unknown lands—Samuel de Champlain de Brouage.

Of seekers after the monopoly there had already been not a few. Cartier's nephews and heirs claimed it by inheritance; the Marquis de la Roche got it and failed; Pontgrave, a merchant of St. Malo, took it next; but none had so much as scratched the

ground for a garden, much less established any enduring settlement.

Champlain, a man of different caliber, made good. It is a pretty picture, this collaboration of Champlain with de Chastes—the one young and enthusiastic, the other old and devout. “Though his head was crowned with gray hairs as with years, he resolved to proceed to New France in person, and dedicate the rest of his days to the service of God and his King.” And to both God and King, Champlain himself was dedicated, for he would not consent to go without permission from Henry, to whom he “was bound no less by birth than by the pension with which his Majesty honored me.” He obtained permission, and inducing Pontgrave to return with them, set out for Canada in 1604. The colony set up in what is now Nova Scotia failed with the death of de Chastes, and was taken over by Sieur de Monts.

The spirit of that colony differed considerably from that of any other founded in America. It was at heart no settlement. While it dug its heels into the slopes above the St. Johns River, barricaded itself against attack and dislodgement, it was essentially merely a resting place for flights into the interior. A small, compact, uncongenial group composed of the riff-raff of France with a sprinkling of priests, lawyer, historian, navigator—all but the most dangerous element, woman. Against her they had secured themselves after a fashion, but mosquitoes and Indians were harder to exclude. What little leisure they had they lolled about, hunted, and picked berries.

Champlain sought no leisure. With the hope of China vaguely in his mind, he left his men to build a fort, set off in a pinnace to explore the coast and to befriend the Indians. The Port Royal colony failed again, and Champlain returned to France to secure a new patron. Four years later he was building a fort at Tadoussac on the Saguenay River. Thence for over thirty years his ardor and his activity knew no rest. One would almost think he had an automobile, so much territory did he cover, into so many nooks and crannies of the continent did he peep. All the way down the coast to Cape Cod, down the interior through Maine and Ver-

mont, far into the west to Lake Huron, with trips in between across the ocean to France. A thorough administrator, a remarkable seaman, he was essentially an idealist concerned with things other than trade. Yet realizing that without trade his dreams were unrealizable, he adjusted enmities and jealousies, squabbles among grant-holders, conflicts between priest and profit-seeker, and established friendships with the Indians. His one great error was his attack on the Iroquois—an attack that was to undo his life-time of labor for France, and turn the continent over to England.

The mainstay of the little community was the beaver trade, at once an aid and a stumbling block to progress. So long as summer was astir with the arrival of the great canoes full of peltries, and the woods abounded in venison, free from the battle shrieks of savage, there was little else the colony could ask for. Surely France offered no such comforts, spread here so generously before the handful of exiles. But winter was a time of hardship and loneliness. The big ships were gone back to France with their stores of furs, and the colonists were left to cut wood, to listen to prayers, and to imagine themselves much happier back in France.

§

One member of the Port Royal colony had no illusions about France, and plenty of work with pen and ink to occupy his snow-bound winter hours—Marc Lescarbot. Since much of our knowledge of what took place is due to his facile pen, it is well to become acquainted with him. Of himself not much is known. He was born at Verino near Laon about 1570, and was called to the bar in Paris at the age of 29. Twenty years later he was called to the altar by Mlle. Françoise de Valpergue. But neither the court, nor the church, nor the home seem to have had a very strong hold on him, and after a loss of a law-suit, he readily accepted a proffer of a place in the colony of New France. Thereafter, little is known of his connection with any of these early ties. Even the time of his death is uncertain. But he wrote a history of New France that makes him still a force amongst us.

Three hundred years have passed, and yet his simple chronicles become ever more significant as part of the history of the founding of civilization on this continent. That he was a poet was not the least of his merits, for it was his imaginative outlook on life that made him see significance in things about him that were lost on the less quick in that still, lush world. He rose above his environment by a serenity of mind in the face of intense hardships rather than by genius, but it becomes evident that given a greater scope he would have enjoyed a wider fame. Only a poet would have written a history of a land that had no history to record—only current events. His career as lawyer was cut short by an injustice perpetrated at the bar, and recoiling from civilization, he sought inner freedom among the savages of Canada. A love of nature, of digging and planting and patiently waiting for life to evolve from the soil, gave him a wider scope than Parisian life allowed. And he became not only our first historian, but our first gardener and one of America's first spokesmen. To him as with Crèvecoeur, living in solitude was emotional release, and while not a hunter hunting was made worthy to him in that "the solitude and silence which accompany it bring beautiful thoughts to the mind." Likewise, with his labors in field and forest: "the days were too short for me, and I often worked in the moonlight." In the small hours of the night he devoted himself to writing. When in a short time his patron, de Monts, lost his monopoly and they all had to return to France, his regret was as much for the loss of his gardens as for the poor savages who would no longer receive the blessings of his creed.

"Those men are indeed to be pitied," wrote Lescarbot, "who, having it in their power to live a quiet life in the country, cultivating the soil, which yields such a good return, pass their lives in Cities, bowing and scraping to each other, seeking excuses to go to law, worrying over this and over that, endeavoring to get the better of their neighbors, racking their brains until the day of their death how to pay the rent, how to dress in silk, and how to buy rich furniture; in short, how to cut a figure and feast on a little vanity, in which there is never any satisfaction. 'Poor fools,'

says Hesiod, 'who little realize that half of these things possessed in peace and quietness is worth more than all of them together accompanied by so much vexation of spirit.'

But even such a spirit comes to lowly grief at times, and Marc was not immune. It happened that some friends of his had sent him from Paris a package of sweetmeats, but the Captain of the vessel carrying them, hearing along the way that the colony had perished during the winter, consumed them himself. Marc's disappointment found vent in his manuscript in several references which are themselves somewhat of literary dainties, though by no means confections.

Small and compact as the colony was, little differences were to be expected, and the diplomatic Champlain had many a tilt with his legal as well as with his spiritual advisers. When Lescarbot arrived in France, he published not only his history, but some satires against the Jesuits which landed him in prison. Champlain asserted simply that Lescarbot's scribbling was possible because he hugged Port Royal a bit too much, and Lescarbot retorted that Champlain made more journeys in his diary than in reality, and spiced them up a bit with exaggeration.

Acrimony and trade jealousy over furs brought about the end of Port Royal, but the disputes in France show clearly that as between Lescarbot and his companions (except Champlain) he was the only one who was little concerned in the beaver trade, but entirely concerned with settlement, and in devising ways and means of attracting the idle, pleasure-loving people of France out to the new world. Charlevoix, the historian, wrote in after years of Lescarbot: "He encouraged some; he touched the honor of others; he won the good-will of all, and spared himself in naught. He daily invented something new for the public good. And there was never a stronger proof of what advantage a new settlement might derive from a mind cultivated by study, and induced by patriotism to use its knowledge and reflections. . . . We there behold an exact and judicious writer, a man with views of his own, and who would have been as capable of founding a colony as of writing its history."



Christmas in the Hudson's Bay Territory

Four years passed after the breakup of Port Royal before Champlain was again able to find the patronage for his predilections for discovery. When at last he was at the head of another expedition of two small ships, there was no happier man in France.

With Poutrincourt as trader in skins, he felt he could devote himself to exploration and find the water route through to China. But when he arrived at Tadoussac in the *St. Lawrence*, he found that the Basque fishermen had defied Poutrincourt who claimed full monopoly over the trade in peltries with the Indians, had fought with him, maimed and captured him, and set at naught the King's grant. Champlain's mastery over the situation soon asserted itself, and Poutrincourt was released. But before the season was over, Champlain learned of a plot among his own crew to murder him and go over to the Basques. With infinite sagacity and good judgment, he countered that plot, and the little colony advanced toward permanence. He established friendly relations with the Indians, pressed in all directions his indefatigable explorations, discovered Lake Champlain—moved to make Canada French in his generation. More and ever more ships began to roll out to sea laden with furs that had come from the far interior of the wild continent.

At the very time that Champlain was pressing southward from Quebec to Lake Champlain, an Englishman, in the employ of the Dutch, was making his way northward along the Hudson River named after him. They passed each other not more than sixty miles apart. Though Hendrik Hudson gave New Amsterdam to Holland, his earlier and subsequent discoveries on behalf of the Muscovy Company and England, blocked for all time the possibility of New France growing to maturity. Hudson also set out to find a route to China, but instead he discovered the great fisheries at Spitzbergen and the vast, inexhaustible fur-fields of the Hudson's Bay region. Thus four years of this navigator's luck outstripped the three decades of restless enterprise of Champlain. China was forgotten the moment the spoils of the north were revealed.

The fur-trade was by that time in full swing. The Jesuits fol-

lowing in the wake of the fur-traders were setting a new goal to the European peoples. For nearly a century the conversion of the savage supplanted the hope of Cathay, and missionary after missionary pressed on through the wilderness, keeping pace with the hunter and the trapper and not infrequently smoothing his path for him and allaying Indian ire at his depredations. The black cowl stood out against the brilliant, barbaric colors of the Indian, colors and costume which the trappers were quick to imitate. But when, to outdo the natives in grandeur, they sought to make a more lasting impression, the trappers arrayed themselves in the silks and fineries of the east, that east toward which they were everlastingly straining. Jean Nicolet, the intrepid explorer and interpreter, dressed himself in "a grand robe of China damask, all strewn with flowers and birds of many colors" when a great occasion required dignity and ceremony and super-human grandeur.

After Champlain forty years were to pass before any other notable effort to find a water route through America to China was to be undertaken. Two Bretons, priests not of the Jesuit order, one, François Dollier de Casson, "powerful in frame, erect and soldierly of bearing," the other, René de Galinee, set out on a trip westward, and took with them as interpreter Robert René Cavalier, Sieur de La Salle. Piety and impetuosity were bound to conflict, and the two priests early regarded the fiery La Salle with a salting of suspicion. La Salle had some difficulty in obtaining permission to go. The Governor of Quebec, whose zeal for discovery was made sluggish by the ponderous packages of furs that now came regularly down the inland rivers to the St. Lawrence, deliberated considerably before issuing the order. But with "a great number of fine speeches, of which he has no lack," La Salle won the Governor over. Once the Governor was convinced he gave his permission, in the language of governors, to search in all the forests and lakes "to see if there might not be something good in them" with no consideration of the property rights in this good belonging to the Indians. What with orders to everyone along the route, and soldiers to impress these on them, the

expedition was under way. At all events, say the priests, it "made a great noise."

A great noise indeed! Searching for the river that connected Lake Ontario with another lake beyond, they began to hear a distant roaring. Approaching nearer and nearer the source of this great sound through twelve miles of wilderness, they at last saw what no white man had seen before them—the Niagara Falls. Galinee says that the "current sucks in deer, stags, elks and roe-buck," and carries them headlong over the brink.

La Salle returned by way of the territory of the Seneca Indians to the east. Ostensibly, his purpose had been to find the route to China, but this he was not to set out to do in earnest until ten years later. The priests, who on occasion were not themselves above handling a fur or two, suspicious of La Salle because he was said to have lost his patrimony on account of his alleged leanings toward the Jesuits whom his father reviled, looked with no great faith upon the young explorer. Hence they preface their remarks about his intentions with a phrase, to us significant.

"*The hope of beaver*, but especially of finding by this route the passage into the Vermillion Sea, into which M. de La Salle believed the River Ohio emptied," they declared, "induced him to undertake this expedition, so as not to leave to another the honor of discovering the passage to the South Sea, and thereby the way to China."

It was not long before these priests fell out with La Salle, Galinee claiming he had deceived them as to his knowledge of the Indian language. Close-locked as were the forests, with the sting of death lurking behind every tree; floating down rivers in canoes so thin that a man "is always, not a finger's breadth, but the thickness of five or six sheets of paper, from death"; death behind them when they set out (three soldiers in Montreal found some furs among the Seneca Indians and murdered an Indian to get them, themselves being at once put to death before the very eyes of the tribe); death invading them by way of ill-cooked food; one would think these dangers would suppress their egos and establish mutual understanding. But the one had his eye on

China and glory, the others, on God and glory, and the fur-trade, the beaver haunts, lay like pitfalls between.

One day they came within reach of an appointed rendezvous, and were all elated because they thought they heard the voices of the men they were expecting to meet. Gleefully they rushed down to the river to greet them. To their amazement, the voices now came from the south. Turning southward, they rushed in that direction, but now the voices came from the west. Disappointed, somewhat saddened and superstitious, they returned to their camp, concluding that it was the "Hunting of Arthur" of which they had often heard, and which, legend had it, confounded many a trapper. Echoes perhaps of lost trappers; strange voices in the night of the wilderness. Thus at every turn danger and terror beset them.

Of those who clung loyally and faithfully to La Salle through all his adventures, few as they were, Henri de Tonty was the best. Tonty had but one arm, the other being made of iron, because of which the Indians named him *Bras de Fer* (Iron Arm). Of iron, also, was the substance of his friendship for La Salle. Through statements by Tonty we read that the expedition was in large measure for the sake of extending the beaver trade. "There are but few beavers," he says, "but to make amends, there is a large number of buffaloes or bears, large wolves" and other creatures, and he admits that if asked what value he could possibly discern in these countries, he would say: "As for the Mississippi, it might produce every year peltries to the amount of 2,000 crowns, and abundance of lead, and of timber for ships."

The beaver trade even down on the Mississippi was already assuming importance, to the Indians as well as to the whites, and both sought to win wider and more inclusive relations. At one place Tonty saw a necklace of pearls on the wife of a chief, and offered her ten yards of glass beads. She declined. But the chief, for diplomatic reasons no doubt, ordered her to make the trade, and as an obedient squaw she did, the shrewd Italian going off with his bargain.

"The hope of beaver," said by the priests to have been La

Salle's first concern, was indeed his last. For all his spectacular achievements, La Salle was no Champlain, and seemed ill-fated from the outset. He was foiled at every turn, an attempt on his life being made by poison before it was successful by bullets. He was too impetuous to put up with compromise. He had thrown in his large land grants for the sake of discovering the route to China, and while himself vitally interested in the commercial prospects of his adventures, he decried the mixture of religion with trade of which he accused the Jesuits. They "have in truth the key to the beaver country," he wrote, "where a brother blacksmith that they have and two companions convert more iron into beaver than the fathers convert savages into Christians."

The northwest passage to China, though yet to open alluring vistas, was thickly carpeted with beavers. They were too busy picking up what lay at their feet to look beyond. A continent rich in furs had lured, diverted, and then broke the persistent illusions of a millennium. And before the restless west could safely reach the Straits of Anian, the Vermilion Sea, the ever more distant Eldorado, it had to pause to gather the riches lurking in the wilderness. The search was to be taken up again by Verendreye, David Thompson and others, but theirs is a saga of another theme, as we shall soon see.

CHAPTER VII

Fathers of the Forest

EVERY era has its dark age. Philosophers see in our own times a mechanical age of darkness, out of which will emerge a new spiritual age, with the collective soul giving way to the individual soul, and man, triumphant, achieving a transcendent power, understanding, and art. In other words, men will walk out from under their machines released for greater spiritual self-realization.

This has happened time and again. It happened when St. Francis left the mechanisms which his time (1205) called civilization, and took himself to the wilderness. Three hundred years later, at the time of which we are writing, was founded another order whose object was to leave behind the mechanism of that age, and to rise out of the decadence to newer levels. This was the Jesuit Order.

John Calvin was already thirty years old when this order was founded, and the parallel struggle between these two attitudes to life—Calvinism and Jesuitism—though it remained in a state of gestation for nearly a century, broke out in all its fury at the beginning of the settlement of America. The Huguenots and the Puritans seemed unable to make a move in the direction of the new world without being forced to evade the ever present Jesuit priest, who contrived in one way or another to take passage with them to the wilderness.

Time in those days was not the flighty thing it is with us. A year and a journey overseas were as but one, and an event in one part of the world, shattering a century of endeavor, had not the slightest effect upon an innovation that was reaching on into the succeeding century in another part of the world. Thus it happened that just as the black cap and robe of the Jesuit priest set foot upon the still, lush shores of the land of the Setting Sun,

the Jesuits were being thrust violently forth from the land of the Rising Sun. The first Jesuit priest came to America in 1611; the last to be tolerated in Japan was in 1614. Sixty-five years before, Francis Xavier landed in Japan. During that half century, idols were smashed, temples destroyed, Buddhists tortured and martyred, and politicians scoffed at as the Jesuits swung their rosaries with pride and scorn. They excommunicated the soul (admitting that he had one) of Hideyoshi, the Napoleon of Japan, consigning him "to hell for all eternity," and turned the more humane Iyeyasu into a Nero who crucified, tortured and extirpated all Christian converts, and finally banged the door in the face of the entire world, and kept it shut for two and a half centuries. Thus was the road to "Cathay" beset by the evils of religious differences and digged with pitfalls of trade.

The Jesuits, whatever their perversities led them to in civilized communities, came to the wilderness with a humble fortitude, self-denial and unmixed devotion that stands above criticism; and though themselves frequently the advance guard of traffic in furs they were as frequently the softening influence in another-wise vicious conflict between savagery and barbarism. Under their influence, savages lowered their tomahawks and "laid their best robe of beaver-skin on the snow, placed on it a crucifix, and knelt around it in prayer." To Japan they had come with defiance; to America with conciliation. The Indians must not be made to wait before embarking in their canoes, and "they must be endured for the love of God, without saying anything or appearing to notice them."

Doubtless, the process of selection was a different one. The priests that chose to go to America were transported by a love of the forests. Nature evoked from the fathers pity and mercy for the benighted savages. The forests loom like cathedrals of God's own fashioning to these enthusiasts, and they dwell in their solitudes with an easier abstraction than in the fortress-like cells of the monastery. Whereas in the cell the mystery of life is personal, and one's own being is but the shell in which the soul incubates, in the open forests there is escape from self into an

objective mystery. Miracles occur constantly in this simplified world of concrete passion and the divine and the bestial keep to their respective places. The Jesuit was a lover of wild nature, the counterpart of the hunter, the explorer and the nomad.

"Truly," wrote Le Mercier, "it is an unspeakable happiness for us, in the midst of this barbarism, to hear the roaring of the demons, and to see Earth and Hell raging against a handful of men who will not even defend themselves." Once a priest was about to be attacked by an Indian with a tomahawk. He stood there gazing with kindly eyes into the furious eyes of the savage, seeing only the image of the Virgin which he said appeared before him, and the Indian lowered his ax and slunk away. Powerful of physique and showing no signs of physical fear, the Jesuit won the respect of the Indians by sharing in all their burdens. Enduring long marches as easily as the native, and seeking no property, they were as free to live the nomadic life of the forests as the Indian. "Though my bed had not been made up since the creation of the world," wrote Father Le Jeune, "it was not hard enough to prevent me from sleeping."

The wilderness was no place for the average man. The ordinary priest or missionary was as putty in the hands of nature. At first, it was impossible for Poutrincourt, eager to avoid the necessity of carrying a Jesuit to his colony, to find a Catholic priest who was willing to go to America. "There was no means of dragging one of them out of Paris," he said. But the Jesuits, fired by religious zeal, could not be withheld. Biard chafed for a year in Bordeaux waiting for a ship, and finally used the influence of the Court to get someone to take him across. Chanabel, at one time a professor of rhetoric in France, became a missionary and exiled himself for life to the wilds of the new world. They were nearly always very well educated men, coming from schools acknowledged even in our time and by such men as Wells and Havelock Ellis to have been the best schools in Europe. They soon made themselves masters of the woods and of the tongues of the Indians. In order to gain some knowledge of the Indian language, these missionaries went three miles along the coast, evading the encroaching

tides and risking the rocky cliffs, just to spend a day or two with some tribes friendly to their interests. When a young apostate Indian who had been carried to France by the Recolets and who learned French only to forget Indian, returned to Canada, the Jesuits veritably begged him to come to them so they might work up a dictionary, "compelled sometimes to ask twenty questions to understand one word" and buying moment by moment with the reward of some tobacco. "Oh, how grateful I am to those who sent me some Tobacco last year," sighs Le Jeune. "The Savages love it to madness. Whenever we came to a difficulty I gave my master a piece of tobacco, to make him more attentive."

In these circumstances they struggled with the mastery, not only of the language, but of themselves. They frequently had to lie flat on the ground, with their noses in the earth, to keep from suffocating in the smoke of the cabins, and they were always shocked with the customs of the people. "Religious eyes could not support the sight of so much lewdness, carried on openly." The ink would freeze even as they were writing near the fire, and the Father "had to place a little pan full of hot coals near" it to keep it from turning into black ice. They witnessed sights which were the dramatization, nay, the exaggeration, of Hell, the reburial of vast numbers of decayed and decaying corpses in a crater-like pit; they witnessed the torturing of prisoners by Indian women and girls who "gave presents to the men to be allowed to torment the poor victims to their heart's content. I did not remain during this torture, I could not have endured such diabolical cruelty; but those who were present told me, as soon as we arrived, that they had never seen anything like it. 'You should have seen those furious women,' they said, 'howling, yelling, applying the fire to the most sensitive and private parts of the body, pricking them with awls, biting them with savage glee, laying open their flesh with knives; in short, doing everything that madness can suggest to a woman!'" And at times, the Fathers themselves were subjected to similar tortures; yet the long, carefully worded, fully detailed, calmly considered letters or "Relations" went home to

the superiors, comprising a record of early American life which no new land has ever been so fortunate as to possess.

The Jesuits established themselves at Quebec, and maintained that as their headquarters even when their missionaries went far beyond the Great Lakes and into the prairies. With their own hands they built their dwellings, planted their gardens, and lured into service hopeful converts. While they vigorously and vociferously denied any direct connection with the fur-trade, it was so beneficial to them with all its ramifications, and they kept so close to the traders, trappers, hunters and explorers, that they have become, willy-nilly, involved for good and evil in all its doings. Bancroft, the historian, declared enthusiastically, "Not a cape was turned, not a river entered, but a Jesuit led the way." Reuben Gold Thwaites denies this. It was his conclusion "that in this land, as elsewhere, in all ages, the trader nearly always preceded the priest. But the trader was no letter writer, or diarist." The dispute is pointless. In fact, the Jesuits generally came so close upon the heels of the trader, and the trader upon those of the Jesuit, the one depending upon the strong arm of the latter, and the latter upon the powerful prayers of the former, that it were idle to disentangle them. Parkman, with his appreciation of picture and drama, is more accurate, being more artistic. "As often happens where the interests of a hierarchy are identified with the interests of a ruling class," he says, "religion was become a fashion, as graceful and as comforting as the courtier's embroidered mantle or the court Lady's robe of fur."

Nevertheless, the fur trade was a very vital factor in the life of the missionary, and the missionary in that of the trader. Few in those days cared to wander far from the shadow of the church. Father Le Jeune even found this a disadvantage when he tried to get more French settlers to come to Canada. "Is it possible they are so afraid of losing sight of the village steeple?" he asked, while the rich trade seeker generally used the church as a catspaw with which to drag a monopoly out of the fire of economic rivalry. Lescarbot, imploring gifts of food and clothing for the new Christians in America, sighed: "But every one looks out for his own

interest. *Sieur de Saint Just* after his report had been made, meant to obtain protection for the beaver trade, believing that considerations of a religious nature would easily secure this for him. However, he could not obtain it." Explorer, idealist, missionary, surveying the far-flung reaches of the fur and fish trade, and observing their own naked hands and helplessness, threw themselves willingly enough behind the commercial interests in the hope that they might thereby foster their own more generous interests.

It was not long before the motives of the Jesuits came into question. In the great drama of wilderness life, the clash between material and spiritual forces is bound to be more pronounced. The trader could not very well see notions of justice which originated in civilization applied to savagery and undermining his easy ascendancy. The missionary had to placate the trader and to win over the Indian, and it taxed all his diplomatic skill. They gained *entré* where the trader often was left knocking, and once the missionary secured the confidence of the native, the trader entered with gusto and success. Japan is a case in point, where trade followed so riotously in the wake of their propaganda, that Japanese Feudal Lords ordered their people into the Christian folds in droves and flocks. Hence, it was the trader who generally utilized the Jesuit to further his own ends, justifying the claim that the priest led the way.

Nevertheless, but for the trader and the economic support he afforded, the Jesuit would have got very little for his pains, and he was more than willing to let the gun and the biceps of the trapper come to his aid in need too. Supported in great measure by the capital and the munitions of the great fur companies, the Jesuit seldom ran seriously counter to their wishes. In one point their interests were certainly at war with each other. The missionary could only hope for real success by making the nomadic Indian a sedentary one, a liver in towns and villages, whereas to the fur merchant, permanent traffic could only be maintained by keeping the Indian a wanderer and in want. The Jesuit saw early and wisely that the sooner France appreciated the immense re-

sources of America and shipped great numbers of French laborers to the land, the sooner would their little spiritual gardens be protected against the jungle of primeval reproduction. Bewailing the lack of laborers, Father Le Jeune declared: "In truth, it is pitiful how the lack of the temporal so effectually retards the spiritual." And it was he who, replying to the charge that the priests were engaging in the fur traffic, explained that in Canada the beaver-skin was the medium of exchange, like cash, and that the Jesuits could no more refrain from using the "coin of the realm" in the wilderness than they could in France. Of ships of their own to import commodities and export furs, they certainly had none, and could not therefore compete with the monopolists in the new world. But it was through the raising of the Indian's comprehension of business practice that the relations of the native and the foreigner were brought to greater harmony.

The Jesuits were driven through such criticism into contradicting themselves somewhat, and while Father Lalemant bemoaned the loss of beavers, Father Chaumonot affected to spurn them entirely. The Iroquois, cried Lalemant, "like an obtrusive phantom, beset us in all places. They prevent the tribes from five or six hundred leagues about us from coming down hither, laden with furs that would make this country overflow with immense riches—as was done in a single journey which some of those Nations undertook this year."

A decade or so later, Father Joseph Chaumonot, addressing the Indians on July 24, 1656, assumed a louder tone as he said: "It is not for purposes of trade that you see us appear in your country. Your furs are of too little value in our eyes to induce us to undertake so long, so difficult and so dangerous a journey. Keep your beaver-skins, if you choose, for the Dutch; even those which may come into our hands will be used for your good. We seek not perishable things. For the Faith we have left our country; for the Faith we quitted the great ships of the French to embark in your small canoes; for the Faith we have given up fine houses, to lodge in your bark cabins; for the Faith we deprive ourselves of the delicate viands we might have enjoyed in France,

to eat boiled meal and other food, which the animals in our country would hardly touch."

Still, they were always under the protection of the Governor who was always the personal representative of the big fur interests, and admitted, as did Father Marquette late in the century, that he felt the need and the value of this protection.

Naturally, the priest could not be a beggar among a people so sharp in judging the comparative value of "presents," the giving of which was one of the most vital forms of social etiquette among them. They carried small articles of barter with them, and supported their missions in part with the benefit of such exchanges for furs. Beads, rings, awls, pocket knives and such small possessions brought many a valuable beaver-skin into the possession of the priest, and Father Du Peron writing to Father Joseph remarks: "Our plates, although of wood, cost us more than yours; for they are valued at one beaver robe, which is a hundred francs." Marquette laughed at the Indians who loved French tobacco so much that "they came and threw beaver-skins at our feet, to get some pieces of it." Almost the last words he wrote in 1675 were: "If the French procure robes in this country, they do not disrobe the savages, so great are the hardships that must be endured to obtain them." As a company, so to speak, they did not engage in the trade, but they certainly indulged extensively in the traffic for personal welfare, delighted in the advancement in the traffic as a whole, feared its curtailment, and encouraged it by their reports to France. As they swung their rosaries through the cool sylvan recesses, they attended not only upon the scattering hosts of Hades, but upon the scared denizens of warren, cave and beaver dam.

Up to 1632, the Recollets were in the majority, but their labors, scattered over too wide a plane, came to naught. Not till they called to their aid the Jesuit Order in 1632 did the work among the Indians take on any very serious proportions. In actual numbers, their converts were slight; but in the records of the time, in the impersonal devotion to their faith, their example is without parallel. Their naïve rejection of all savage superstitions

by a super-imposition of their own incredible claims to achievements through miracle and faith is astounding in men of such wide education and shrewd understanding. Yet they went on baptizing the dying and the newly born, naming their neophytes with the names of kings, queens and princes, recording testimonials of miracles, and inviting sufferings upon themselves to prove their faith. Jealousy, international war, religious differences they faced with unconcern, and wrote into the history of the new world many a chapter of dramatic grandeur.

In April, 1636, there arrived in Canada Isaac Jogues, a native of Orleans, France. Without delay, he proceeded to the Huron mission where for six years he worked among the Indians. On one of his journeys to his station, in 1643, he fell afoul of some Iroquois "who, had we not some help from France, would undoubtedly ruin here both the faith and commerce" according to Father Vimont. Stripping, insulting and outraging him, cutting off his left thumb, and crushing with their teeth the index finger of his right hand, they refused to let the Dutch ransom the priest, reserving him for further torture. The Indians were well armed with guns, and sought to frustrate the French and conquer or annihilate the Hurons "to make of them both but one people and only one land." Seeing an opportunity to convert some of the Iroquois, Jogues became "more and more resolved to dwell here as long as it shall please Our Lord, and not to go away, even though an opportunity should present itself." Considering himself as virtually dead, and fearing any attempt at rescue would only bring complications upon the French and Hurons, he discouraged all thought of it. Though his hands were mutilated, he wrote clearly, in an excellent style, and in three languages, French, Latin and Indian. For two months he served the Indians as a slave, acting as companion to their women. He afterward "secretly confessed" that his faith in God was sorely tried during these miseries, and he would pray for hours, and keep to the forests in search of fire-wood longer than necessary just to be alone. His clothing was gone, his food was "a very little sagamite," he existed thus "during forty days without house, without fire,

without other shelter than the sky and the woods, and a miserable scrap of I know not what, almost as transparent as the air. . . . He had his thighs and legs cracked and split by the rigor of the cold," and worms infested his wounds.

Finally he escaped to the Dutch who sent him back on a boat going to Holland, and dropped him off on the lower coast of Brittany, and on the 5th of January, 1644, he knocked at the door of the college at Rennes. So emaciated was he that he was not recognized, and the Rector, hearing that he was from Canada, inquired after Isaac Jogues. " 'Is he dead? Is he still captive? Have not those Barbarians slain him?' 'He is at liberty, and it is he, my Reverend Father, who speaks to you,' and thereupon he falls upon his knees to receive his blessing." His condition became known throughout France, and the Queen remarked "Romances are feigned, but here is a genuine combination of great adventures." . . . But that very spring, Isaac Jogues set sail again for Canada. Once there he was determined to return to the Iroquois, where he was slain the moment he came among them, in 1647.

It is hard to think with too much compassion upon the lot of these priests, for they rejoiced in their martyrdom with masochistic satisfaction. Father Lalemant declared that some of the missionaries "protest that the fires of the Iroquois are one of their motives for the journey." Nevertheless, they emerge from the forest as figures picturesque, noble, intelligent and courageous. They knew how to believe, how to dare, and how to live dramatically.

In 1674 Father Jacques Marquette made his first voyage in the course of which he re-discovered the Mississippi River. On this journey he contracted dysentery, but nothing daunted, he returned the following year to found a mission among the Illinois. Through that long wretched winter his illness made him expect death at any moment, and after preaching to a village of some fifteen hundred Indians, he started to retrace his steps, but day by day his strength lessened. Feeling that death was at hand, he gave instructions to his comrades about his burial. They soon ar-

rived at "an eminence that he deemed well suited to be the place of his interment." Here they laid him down "in the least uncomfortable way they could" and began quietly to set up camp. "Finding himself alone in the midst of these forests . . . he had leisure to repeat all the acts in which he had continued during these last days." After giving his companions his parting instructions and thanking them for their kindness to him, he went through with the usual ritual in preparation for his death. Now he told them to go and rest, promising to call them in a few hours. When his final moment had come he "gave thanks to the Divine Majesty . . . above all, (for dying) as he had always prayed, in a wretched cabin in the midst of the forests and bereft of all human succor." His prayer was answered. He died "in the midst of the woods, bereft of everything."

Thus in trial and in torture and in peaceful death, they were calmly dramatic. They helped plant civilization in the heart of the wilderness which they loved.

CHAPTER VIII

Trappers Raise Savage Ghosts

IF there is any doubt whether trader or priest led the way of civilization in North America it is dissipated the moment a finer distinction is drawn between trader and trapper. Before both trader and priest always went the trapper. The trader, as representative of the monopolies, soon built a manor in the new world and barricaded himself against the slings and arrows of outraged barbarism. But he brought with him, besides arms and ammunition, a human bumper which took the shock from the impact of civilization with the wilderness,—crews composed of gamblers, thieves, murderers, jail-birds, cutthroats and mercenaries to whom civilization was as delectable as it was to the savage.

Whenever a king was awakened by a monopolist or explorer to dreams of wealth and empire in the new world, "his windy gift of ink and parchment" included orders for the ventilation of his prisons. Then would his soft imperial heart be stirred by the thought of the mercy of God, and moved "to perform a compassionate and meritorious work toward criminals and malefactors," with the hope that they might mend their ways and turn likewise to God, he offered the explorer "such and so many" of these unfortunates "as may seem to him useful and necessary to be carried to the aforesaid countries."

To these, their toils were merely a reprieve from the gallows. To them the savage wilds were but little harsher than their self-righteous masters. And only too often men deserted such civilization for life among the natives with a wise sense of the fitness of things. They absconded to the forests and cast in their lot with the savages, leading them in their revenge against the white man and adding invention to passion in the technique of human tor-

ture. In time there grew up in the wilderness a whole race of white people, half-breeds, *bois brulés*, *coureurs de bois* and *bateau* men, dashing, fearless, tireless, paragons of barbarous nobility whom no Indian spirit need be ashamed of. The partial rebarbarization of man had first to be accomplished before the elevation of the barbarian could begin.

And many of the leaders were nothing loath to employ this means. When Roberval, who was the patron of Cartier on his first voyages, set out to found a colony in America, he took with him, besides criminals and gentry, some women, with foresight not common in most undertakings at the time. Among these was his own niece, a mild and gentle maiden, brave only in her love. To be with her in her new life came her young lover, a young gentleman hardly eligible by birth for her hand. In the closeness of life on the little vessel, it was not long before their attachment was discovered and their relations exposed. The impetuous uncle lost no time in coming to a decision as to what he should do with the culprits. Nearing a barren dot of land known to the sailors as the Isle of Demons, he set ashore the girl and her maid (who had been in collusion with her), and sailed away. The lover jumped overboard and reached her, and there in that forsaken world the first white baby was born, in 1542, or about forty-five years before the birth of Virginia Dare. It did not live very long, nor did the luckless father and loyal nurse. Marguerite alone withstood the ordeal for two years, until some fishermen, daring the demons, rescued her and carried her back to France.

She was not the only sufferer at the hands of Roberval. Whippings, hangings, shootings, singly and in numbers, reduced the "such and so many" members of his crew, and disease and starvation did the rest. Roberval himself met a violent death after his return to Paris, but there is no completed record of what happened to the members of the colony thus lightly dropped on the coast of North America. Their sufferings were so intense that "even the Indians were moved to pity, and wept at the sight of their woes." How many of the sufferers escaped to these Indians is unknown.

Meanwhile fishermen turned hunters, and hunters pressed on into the interior, and fifty years went by before the prisons again were opened to him who would but promise the king furs from Canada. This time it was La Roche who obtained the privilege, and he transferred his prison findings to a little ship so tiny that the crew had at least one advantage over their former confinement—they could wash themselves by leaning over the side of the deck. Upon reaching Sable Island, La Roche disembarked his human cargo and set merrily off to spy out the coast of his vast domains for the most favorable landing place. A furious gale came up from over the land and drove the little vessel back to France. The forty stranded men waited. Five years went by before the fate of these unfortunates whom out of compassion the King had condemned to the wilderness, reached the ears of Henry IV, and he dispatched a vessel for their rescue. The captain found, not forty, but eleven. His sympathy went so far that he relieved them of the furs they had accumulated in those dreary years, but he brought them back to France. The King summoned them before him. "They stood before him," says Parkman, quoting an old chronicler, "like river-gods of yore; for from head to foot they were clothed in shaggy skins, and beards of prodigious length hung from their swarthy faces." The captain was forced to return their furs to them, and they were permitted to embark on the Canadian fur trade on their own.

It was still difficult, however, to find willing voyagers to these distant parts among the general mass of the French people. In only a few were the pristine instincts for hunting and ranging in the forests unaffected by the centuries of civilian life. While on the whole France was perhaps better off economically than England, and fewer people cared to move out into the uncertain world, yet their situation was none too enviable.

"There are so many strong and robust peasants in France who have no bread to put in their mouths," wrote Father Le Jeune, yet, "they would rather languish in their misery and poverty, than to place themselves some day at their ease among the inhabitants of New France."

Only the gayer and less thrifty, provided with imaginations and hardy instincts, could lift themselves out of the slough of life in Europe. Even among the clergy, only such venturesome spirits made their way abroad. The office of chaplain on the ships, says Etienne Dupont, the St. Malo historian, was generally a place of refuge for the wilder spirits among the clergy. Monks who had difficulties with their abbés and priors and whose conduct in the interior in the monasteries was not very edifying, preferred a free life in the open air, perilous as it was, to religious seclusion or interminable expiation of their sins.

But such types were none too common, and colonizers, dissatisfied with what they got from the prisons, were given the freedom of the cities for choice of crews. They dragged in a motley crowd of vagrants and general riff-raff. Settlement was not actually on their minds. The noble monopolists saw only the traffic in furs, and wished for as wild a crew as the savages themselves with which to drag in their harvest. Thus it was that Champlain, after settling the question of his rights with the unruly Basques whom he encountered at Tadoussac in the St. Lawrence, found himself the object of a plot on the part of his own crew. A number of the most violent of his men, shortly after they landed, concocted a scheme for murdering Champlain and going over to the Basques. They succeeded in intimidating the whole group to such an extent that even the loyal ones dared not reveal the plan. However, one of them was so mortally terrified by the prospect that he succeeded in waylaying Champlain and making a clean breast of it. Biding his time, Champlain got the leaders on a little boat in the harbor by a decoy invitation from that crew to have a drink, had them chained, and then went out among the rest with threats and promises, and so undermined the mutiny. The leaders were executed, and Champlain had no further trouble of that sort.

Matters were not always as serious. Times were when the arduous labors of laying the foundations of a new civilization in the wilderness had their joyous respites. Thus, as they lay at anchor in the Kinibeque, in the cool, clear fall of 1611, the French

saw half a dozen canoes full of Indians appear, reconnoiter for a spell, and take up their position on the opposite bank of the river. All through the night they kept up their haranguing, singing, dancing, and disporting themselves in purgatorial deviltries, to the horror and revulsion of the godly man, Biard. Unable longer to bear these pagan orgies, which he felt were but "invocations of the devil," the Father resorted to a counter attack on the devil. "To oppose the power of this cursed tyrant, I had our people sing some sacred hymns, as the *Salve*, the *Ave Maria Stella*, and others." But the devil was a wily antagonist, and hopped over to the French. For once they got going on songs, they could not stop, and having exhausted the sacred ones, they took up more popular airs. These depleted, and, according to Biard, being "natural mimics, they began to mimic the singing and dancing of the Armouchiquois" across the river. This, not the psalms, arrested the attention of the Indians who stopped their cavorting with the devil for a moment. Thinking they had conquered, the French stopped, but the Indians at once began again. So the French mimicked them again. Even the old Padre fell for the devil. Descending from his sanctified elevation, he admitted that "It was really very comical, for you would have said that they were two choirs which had a thorough understanding with each other, and scarcely could you distinguish the real Armouchiquois from their imitators."

In better moments, their lives were far from deplorable. The severe winters prevented ordinary construction. Then, instead of huddling about the fire, they kept themselves warm by hunting rabbits and game, and the early mornings found them out skating instead of lazing in bed. The hard, clear atmosphere was a release from the raw, damp French climate, making them forget somewhat the other joys of Paris. And while the pious priests sacrificed their comforts in order that the devils of barbarism might be driven from the wilderness, their lay confrères were rapidly reverting to the pleasures of the wilds. For every savage won to Christ, an unamenable civilian was let loose upon the wandering hosts of pagans.

"The devil, who never sleeps," said the skeptic Lescarbot, "has shown the jealousy which he felt at the salvation of these people, and at seeing that the name of God was glorified in this land, by inciting a wicked Frenchman, not a Frenchman but a Turk, not a Turk, but an atheist, to divert from the path of righteousness several savages who had been Christians in their hearts and souls for three years." He does not mention the Frenchman's name "on account of the love and reverence I bear his father," but adds, "but I protest that I will immortalize him if he does not mend his ways."

For the majority of men who made these early trips to America, there was little to hold them to the settlements. They were bound by no tangible grip of conscience or gratitude. This combination of circumstances soon peopled the forests with a footloose uncontrollable lot of men whom the calls of nature and of character drove closer and closer to the tribes of Indians and into the arms of Indian maidens. It became year by year more difficult to keep the men at the posts and under the sway of their tyrannical officers. They ranged farther and ever more far into the forests, familiarized themselves with the habits of the Indians, bound themselves in blood to the natives, and secured much of the power into their own hands.

On the whole, the French saw an advantage in these alliances. The priests wished to legalize the relationship, but the Indians, shrewdly, preferred the looser ties, and told the missionaries that the Frenchmen might help themselves to what women they wished without such useless conventions as ceremonies and councils. To which Le Jeune replied "that it was very true that the Frenchmen who had hitherto married in the country had not made such a stir about it, but also that their intentions were far removed from ours—that their purpose had been to become barbarians, and to render themselves exactly like them."

Indeed, it was. The Indian women found themselves somewhat better treated by the white men, there was comfort and a more regular life, and the numbers reduced their toil somewhat. The

polygamous relationship was not distasteful to them, and the men found most of their labors lightened at little cost. The situation however in time aroused considerable wrath in the French leaders, for it tended to make their trappers more easy-going, lazy and independent. Pretending that they needed these women as servants about their huts, they withdrew themselves from the French communities and lived alone. "May we therefore be delivered for ever from those solitaires and their solitudes," complained Etienne de Carheil in 1702. But the men, when compelled to move about the wilds, carried the women with them hither and thither, and feeling secure in the approval of the native tribes, brooked no interference.

The life of the trappers was laborious and dangerous, full of exposure and privations, followed by premature exhaustion and disability which seldom permitted them to reach old age. Under the strain of excessive toil, with subsistence scanty and precarious, their constitutions could not stand the burden even if they did not meet death from the Indians. They were nearer to the Indians in psychology than the officials, and without them the fur trade could not have advanced, nor settlement either. While they toiled there was never a moment of rest; then would come the long, weary, idle winter months, when the canoes would no longer come down from the upper streams, the ships would sail for the open seas, friendships would be interrupted, and thoughts would turn to France, saddened by memories. Then the priests found these unyielding men bend somewhat beneath the weight of loneliness and "lend ear to the word" and confess their shortcomings. Then casuistry came to good purpose, and the padres would plead with a prudish world not to ask too much.

"I have a request to make," Father Le Jeune wrote home, "of all those who wish to express an opinion of the condition of our colony—to close their eyes while the ships are at anchor in our ports, and to open them at their departure, or shortly afterwards, to the agreeable sight of our countrymen. . . . They wish to make merry, and they fall into excesses: their good habits grow

drowsy, and vice begins to try to raise its head; there is a greater indulgence in drink and feasting during that time than in all the rest of the year."

Into the simple relationship of Frenchman with Indian came the disturbing elements of English, Dutch and Spanish. The jealousies over the fur trade injected a spirit into the wilderness which was destined to bring all the worst elements of savagery to the fore. These mutually destructive interests were "worse than the savagery of the barbarians" and the consequent feuds reduced the Hurons from a tribe of 30,000 to 10,000. The rivers through which the natives brought their furs became the scenes of carnage and tragedy. And while the Indians suffered intensely, the trappers seldom escaped retribution.

Late one autumn, when the Iroquois knew it was the custom of the Hurons to go down to the French with their peltries and for their winter supplies, an army of some ninety Iroquois warriors moved up toward Montreal to intercept them. Such was the reputation of the Iroquois that the Hurons often considered long and in deep council whether to risk the journey, and the French had paid dearly for their courage in disregarding them. It seemed a little early for the Iroquois to be on the war path, so two young Frenchmen, François Marguerie and Thomas Godefroy, wandered off on a hunt, leaving the settlement a little too far behind. Not long after, they fell in the way of the savages, were surprised and taken prisoners. After a few preliminary samples of torture, they were sent on down to the Iroquois country for further discipline according to Indian notions. Marguerie, knowing that the French would miss them shortly and seek them out, managed to leave signs on the trees to indicate the route by which they were being led, but it was suicidal for the French to try to recapture them. All through that winter the two men suffered untold misery. Every conceivable method of inflicting pain was tried on them, and the closest watch kept against their escape. However, Marguerie managed to write a message with a stick for pen and soot from the bottom of a kettle for ink on the inside of a beaver skin for paper. The peltry was traded in by the Indians



Fur trapper's cabin

to the Dutch who were friendly with them. When the Dutch read this sorry history of these two men they bought them out of captivity, and they at last found their way back to Montreal after months and months of misery. Such was the plight in which many a trapper found himself in that lawless land.

Through the years, the savage elements from the prisons of Europe that first fell afoul of the Indians were refined to the status of the wilderness. As Charlevoix put it, "while the Indians did not become French, the Frenchmen became savage." The French found it feasible—and the English too—to impress the savage with the terror of the European. Father Claude Allouez, forgetting that he was a harbinger of peace, and trying to convey to the primitive mind the puissance of the king of France, declared: "When he attacks he is more terrible than the thunder: the earth trembles, the air and the sea are set on fire by the discharge of his cannon; while he has been seen amid his squadrons, all covered with the blood of his foes, of whom he has slain so many with his sword that he does not count their scalps, but the rivers of blood which he sets flowing. So many prisoners of war does he lead away that he makes no account of them, letting them go about whither they will, to show that he does not fear them." And there rang through the forests of America, "the half-horse, half-alligator dialect of the early race of boatmen" to show that they too had no fears of this thunder.

For in those days it was all for oneself, and lonely too, and life had no comforts that were not in one's own heart and hand. Men knew self-mastery, and their own limits, their own weaknesses, which they tested in those lonely hours when that which they feared most—jibes and jeers—could not assail them. In civilization, men are not so much cowards in what they are afraid to do, as in what they make others do. But in the hidden fastnesses, human nature could see itself as it really was, could feel terror without fear of shame.

Many a "convict" in time came into a little wealth. Comforts too, commodious buildings, semblance of civilization, and even women arrived, to soften the texture of wilderness life. "Al-

though descended from aboriginal mothers, many of the females at the different establishments are as fair as the generality of European ladies."

Ghosts of savagery raised their heads all about, and the evils and vices of civilization stalked in their midst.

CHAPTER IX

Beads for Beaver

THE white man has always assumed that the first attitude of the Indian toward him was that of a man to a god. This is merely giving expression to his own delusion of grandeur. When their fears subsided, the Indians, lonely in their ages of isolation on this vast continent, danced with glee before their new-found friends, and offered them skins as a symbol of their friendliness. Standing up to their hips in the water, and casting sea-water over their heads with their hands, they did all in their power to show the feelings within them. And when the white men came ashore and showed they were willing to trade, the Indians stripped themselves naked of all their furs and gave them away for trifles. Rubbing the arms of the white men to make sure they were real, they raised their own to heaven "shewing many signes of gladnesse."

The forests had revealed no such marvels as these in the untold past. The Indians had built up strange compensations for their lonely hearts. Two concepts had filled their crude cosmogony: the hopes for light on life and speed on earth. Cramped in their wilderness, they had envisioned escape. Darkness, which had enshrouded their earth before, had been dispelled by the fleetness of the squirrel who beat the bear in a race round the first waters. As a prize for his success, he demanded light, and breaking off a piece of bark from a tree, he taught men how to make canoes so that they too might have speed. Light to see by and means of locomotion—Edison and Ford—are indeed the two basic elements of all civilization. And with them, the Indian had searched out every nook and cranny of his continent. Francis La Flesche, an Omaha Indian, in the department of Indian Affairs, graduate of the National University Law School, recently gave the lie to

the general misrepresentation of the status of Indian life prior to the coming of the white man. "The white people," he said, "speak of the country at this period as a wilderness as though it was an empty tract without human interest or history. To us Indians it was as clearly defined then as it is today; we knew the boundaries of tribal lands, those of our friends and those of our foes, we were familiar with every stream, the contour of every hill, and each peculiar feature of the landscape, habits, tradition. It was our home, the scene of our history, and we loved it as our country."

But their canoes were not ships, and the outer world still lay beyond their grasp. To make ships, wisdom and iron were requisite and the beaver came to the aid of the Indian, who had always watched him at his dams and celebrated him for his sagacity. The beaver were looked upon merely as a fallen race of Indians who would some day be restored to their former state, and in its simple inversion, the superstition was indeed prophetic. For it was the beaver whose skin raised the Indians from the stone age to the iron age in the course of a few years, sent a number of Indians across the seas to witness marvels undreamed of, and twisted the skeins of human destiny into such knots that sedentary Europeans became nomads and nomadic Indians became sedentary.

"Missi picoutau amiscou," said an Indian chief to a missionary, with dreamy eyes looking as he spoke. "The beaver does everything perfectly well. It makes kettles, hatchets, swords, knives, bread: and, in short, it makes everything." Then pointing to a beautiful knife, he added with a short laugh: "Ha! The English have no sense; they give us twenty knives like this for one Beaver skin."

Indeed, neither the English nor the French nor the Dutch had any sense. They laughed at the Indians for taking a few beads for a beaver skin, and the Indians laughed at them for exchanging that which ran wild and called for no husbandry for that which required wisdom and art to fashion. And when they saw the Europeans squabbling among themselves over the beaver trade, their amusement was often turned to contempt, and the erstwhile

gods became creatures with feet of clay. Men had actually fallen from their high estate, and become beavers. In the preceding chapter we saw the gradual barbarization of certain white men; in this we shall see the disintegration of the savage through the fur trade.

One of the most puzzling things about the Indian is his lack of imaginative curiosity. One wonders why a group of Indians did not buy a ship and sail it across the seas to find out what sort of life the Europeans led behind them. Indians carried over by explorers had returned with as fantastic pictures of European life as the explorers had of Indian life. In 1508, Captain Thomas Aubert of Dieppe had "brought back from there some of the Natives, whom he exhibited to the wonder and applause of France." Cartier, when he left Tadoussac, carried away with him two Indians. One of them, Donnacona, a chief, lived for four or five years in France, and was presented to the King. Cartier "made him repeat to the prince all that he had himself said of the advantages of the country." Though here was evidence of the humanness of the Indian, nevertheless, Cartier spread tales of two-legged animals and one-legged men to the wonder and the amazement of the French. And for nearly a century they believed it. Lescarbot with the mind of a lawyer let loose a fusillade of corrections of error and exaggeration perpetrated by men with an "incurable itch for scribbling," distortions of geography and of life, about "men who eat no food and have no rectum." Similarly, the Indians narrated stories of marvels they had seen, the vast crowds in the cities, the steaming cook-shops, and the coaches and horses which they described as "rolling cabins drawn by Moose." The grandeur of the King and the Court made a powerful impression. A very few, educated in France, returned to lord it over their kin, while relatives of those who died abroad became suspicious of the white men who carried off their loved ones to dispose of them in some mysterious fashion.

The explorers, to attract attention to the uniqueness of their discoveries, clarified the fantastic in the new world; the priests, to arouse the sympathy of the religious, stressed the benighted

state of the savage; the rebel against authority and restraint drew attractive pictures of the freedom and naturalness of wilderness life. To bring home to Europeans the great need for missionary work in savagedom, the wretched side of its life was constantly portrayed; yet to chide the French for not emigrating to the new world, the same writers extolled the very life they at other times defamed. Justly did Lescarbot decry many of the white men's pretensions. Speaking of the fact that Indians slept on beaver skins, he reminded his countrymen that in "this we have nothing to jest about, for our old Gallic ancestors did the same thing, and even dined from the skins of dogs and wolves, if Diodorus and Strabo tell the truth." Buckle has more recently added to this. "Until the 17th Century," he says, "no glass was manufactured in Scotland, neither was any soap made there. Even the higher class of citizens would have deemed windows absurd in their wretched abodes; and as they were alike filthy in their persons as in their houses, the demand for soap was too small to induce anyone to attempt its manufacture." It was the Scotch, such as Mackenzie, McLoughlin, Fraser and McGillivray, who in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries virtually controlled the fur trade with the Indians.

In contrast to European life, Father Biard observed succinctly of the Indians: "You do not encounter a big-bellied, hunchbacked, or deformed person among them; those who are leprous, gouty, affected with gravel, or insane, are unknown to them. Any of our people who have some defect, such as the one-eyed, squint-eyed, and flat-nosed, are immediately noticed by them and greatly derided, especially behind our backs and when they are by themselves. For they are droll fellows, and have a word and a nickname very readily at command, if they think they have any occasion to look down upon us. And certainly (judging from what I see) this habit of self-aggrandizement is a contagion from which no one is exempt, except through the grace of God. You will see these poor barbarians, notwithstanding their great lack of government, power, letters, art and riches, yet holding their

heads so high that they greatly under-rate us, regarding themselves as our superiors."

In their pride the Indians were sometimes willing to make concessions for the sake of bettering their economic situation. One chief expressed a readiness to give his daughter in marriage to the King of France if the King would make him some handsome present. There was much in the eagerness of the white man for the trade of the red man to warrant such an innocent assumption. And there was more in the security of the savage within his own land in comparison with the dependence of the civilized on him for forest lore, to fortify that faith. Every white man was from the first dependent upon the instincts of the Indian, who, without compass, without markers, could guide him winter and summer anywhere and everywhere and bring him with unerring judgment back to the place from which he had wandered. With prophetic vision the savages sometimes even foretold the approach of succor and supplies days ahead of the relief canoe. They would travel hundreds of miles, like things drawn by magnetic power, over prairie, barricade and flood, dragging their families and their furs, to meet some white man at an appointed rendezvous. Yet after trek or hunt or weeks of semi-starvation, they would ask no question upon arrival until they had smoked a pipe of tobacco.

"Oh, God! what a difference there is between a Frenchman and a Savage!" exclaimed Father Le Jeune. This is the difference: When a Frenchman comes in from the hunt he flings down his kill and at once begins to eat and give a verbose account of all his experiences. But "our Savage is far removed from this animation." The savage leaves his catch outside the wigwam, enters without a word nor is a word spoken to him, undresses near the fire while his wife attends him, wringing out his soaking garments, then covers himself with a robe and eats—all without saying a word. Not till he has finished smoking a pipe does he open his mouth, wonders to relate. Indeed, "Oh, God! what a difference there is between a Frenchman and a Savage!"

The life of the primitive person is never peaceful. Fear besets his waking and sleeping moments. The Indian, knowing that all about was war, "sought refuge and a haven of rest from the spirit of war" in his wigwam. He had sought it in a political League under Hiawatha, but the coming of the white man threw the Indian world into greater confusion, and scattered its forces in a thousand different directions for the sake of the scraps of iron and the guns which were to become the foundation of its newer civilization. Living in single families, weak, timid in the face of the overwhelming forces of nature, the Indians were kept in a nomadic state, always close to the beaver regions, always behind the roving herds of buffalo, always tracking the bear and the deer. Only when they gathered for trade at some post did they know some of the joys of human contact, the peace of mutual protection. Happiness was none too common, and anxiety was the constant state of their existence. The slightest hostile movement upon their frontiers set the tribes agog with alarm.

From the beginning of the fur trade, everything possible was done to keep the Indian a nomad. The English traders saw early the greater advantage in making the Indian bring his furs to the post than in sending white men out after them. In that way the risk was largely the Indian's and losses en route were borne by him. The French, more gifted in the ways of the woods, more lenient in the direction of the native customs, wandered with the Indian and accumulated his peltries in distant regions. In both cases, the exigencies of wild life called for constant movement in the wake of the little creatures of the woods who furnished these supplies. Both French and English sought to develop *entrepreneurs* from among their own people—trappers, *bateau* men, *coureurs de bois*—who could live with the Indians and shift with them as the season and the success of the hunt required.

The missionaries, however, realized just as early that for them success lay only in converting the savage first and foremost into a city-dweller, into a tinkering home-maker, sedentary and always accessible. Everyone tried to train the Indians in ways most conducive to his own interests, and help them over the chasm

between the stone age and the iron age with the least loss of vantage which the primitive life afforded. In both cases the red man was doomed to enslavement by the white. The Europeans took full advantage of the new dependence of the Indian upon hatchets, kettles, clothes, guns and rum. And the missionaries, seeing that the material had a more immediate appeal than the spiritual, turned wandering tinker in order that they might be close upon his heels at all times. We see them teaching the natives the use of metals, helping them to fix their guns and mending their pots and pans for them, and getting a word in edgewise here and there about the glory of God and the futility of material things.

Periodically the Indians made their long journeys to the settlements, the better to trade and to learn the ways of the white man. This long "going down to the French" as it came to be called, was romance and adventure replete with fun and profit. No such undertaking was begun without holding several councils. Once it was decided, a feast was held at which they ate up every vestige of food they had accumulated and drank up everything in containers. Then the chief sang a song "that he was going to Montreal with the Frenchmen, and was on that account offering these prayers to their God, entreating him to be propitious to him on the voyage and to render him acceptable to the French nation. . . . All those who wished to go on the voyage laid down a stick; there were enough people to man thirty canoes. At the Sault, they joined seventy other canoes, of various tribes, all of whom formed a single fleet." And the chief that could command the greatest number of canoes was esteemed above all others.

By previous arrangement, the upland Indians would assemble at a given lake or river, build their canoes, group themselves according to bonds of fellowship or promise, and set off for the post. The captain seated in the center of the canoe, they proceeded in regular order. Arriving at the Fort, they would salute and be saluted with fowling-piece and cannon, and the servants and women would discharge the packs of peltries from the canoes. Pipes smoked, they would exchange greetings, and make the

usual remarks about the condition of the winter's hunt and the extent of the stores at the factory.

In time the Indians found in the neighborhood of the settlement a release from anxiety which was hardly to be found anywhere else between Canada and Mexico. They were drawn to the French by the promises and encouragement of the missionaries. Here they saw houses being made of huge timbers, and fires that burned upon the hearth without torment to the eyes. Here too gardens lay pregnant with fruits and vegetables, and grapes and berries that spread wild were crushed into wines, and fibers were woven into fabrics. And this was the promise and cheer that the Fathers were holding out to the Indians, that they might become agriculturalists instead of roving trappers and hunters. But who was to provide the wherewithal to make the change?

There chanced to be a wealthy French officer, Noel Brulard, Chevalier de Sillery, who upon retirement from active life bethought himself of a way in which he might achieve merit. Father Le Jeune was not long in determining the surest road toward this holy end, and urged him to establish a village near Quebec for the Indians. Sillery liked the idea, and the project was announced to the natives. At once, two Indians came forward hoping to be favored. Negahamat offered the Father his children and his family, and Nenaskoumat offered himself. For weeks the plan warmed the cockles of their hearts. They weighed the problems carefully, considered fully the changes that would come over their lives, the attitude of their fellow-Indians, the violation of customs, the impossibility of retreat in the event of failure.

One evening they both arrived at the priest's house and asked for permission to remain till after dark to discuss the scheme. When dusk fell, they became pensive. Things were not happening as rapidly as they had hoped; the promised aid had not yet arrived from France. Speaking out frankly, they urged the priest not to keep them in suspense by false expectations. "Thou art already old," they said with native boldness, "and it is no longer permitted to thee to lie." They exacted a solemn promise that if they took the new house to be built and established themselves

in it they would not be thrown out upon some reversal of affairs in France, to their great humiliation. But since the padre could give them no answer till word came from Brulard in spring, they accepted his personal assurance, and separated for the winter—"the one crossing the great river to go in search of Beavers, the other coming to encamp very near Kebec."

In spring they presented themselves, their hearts full of joy. The other savages could hardly believe their eyes. Could it be possible that a real house would be given to savages! Everybody waited for the miracle. At last news arrived that the deeds or papers were on their way from Tadoussac where they had just been brought from France. The two natives could restrain themselves no longer. "As they saw that the wind might delay them, they asked me for a written message, that they might go and bring them in their canoe; I gave it to them at once, and they embarked still more quickly. They went like wind, came alongside the bark, took the two Fathers out of it, and brought them back to us." And thus two savage hunters were changed into farmers, and the wigwam enlarged with wings and corners. The Indian was edging himself into the more cosy nooks of civilization.

It was slowly beginning to dawn upon him that his days of independence were numbered and that wisdom lay in acquiring the knowledge and the ways of the white man. Even the language and the writing of the pale face must be conquered, and as early as 1640 we find Chief Joseph Chihwatenhwa, toward the end of his days, striving to master the writing of the French. So sincere was he that he asked "if there would be any sin in wishing to know how" and the priests saw in this not only a means of saving his soul, but of widening their knowledge of the Indian tongue, "so he will be of great service to us, with the help of God, in the conjugations."

Conjugations! Thenceforth, the word most frequent on the lips of the Indian was the imperative of pity. "We see ourselves dying and being exterminated every day," wrote Noel Negahamat to the padre in France. Domine miserere! The Indians had not heard that chant frequently in vain.

CHAPTER X

The Hundred Associates

THERE is nothing more benign than monopoly. All virtues are locked within its enfolding arms. Not only does it possess, it restrains, it protects, it prohibits, it controls. In other words, monopoly is to trade what monogamy is to marriage. European imperialists of the Renaissance had but to look with courtly eyes upon the fair New World, to claim it, and their feet generally kept pace with their desires. To want and to have seemed almost synonymous terms, and to favor kings, explorers laid claim to all that lay behind the hills they discovered, and to favor friends, kings granted vast monopolies that reached all possible sources of profit in fields unknown. In the struggle over the fur trade in North America, monopoly played a pre-eminent part, with a dash of private passions and gallant intrigues thrown in for good measure.

Small monopolists had, as we shall now see, sought to extract all the fur trade could offer for nearly a century before Cardinal Richelieu, Prime Minister of France, founded the "Company of a Hundred Associates." Richelieu knew only too well how to play upon all the instruments as the arch-monopolist and while a Cardinal, did not disdain even the more tender interests. Only two years before he organized this association by which New France was to be drawn more securely under his ever more comprehensive control, Richelieu took part in a little private "duel of conspiracy" which involved the first Duke of Buckingham, then, like himself, a young, attractive, bold and powerful favorite of the Crown. Buckingham was gay and he was beautiful, and his pride was inordinate, and he appointed to himself the delightful task of bringing Henrietta of France to the bed of Charles I of England. The office was infectious. Buckingham met Ann of

Austria, the young Queen of France, and was bold enough "to fix his eyes upon, and dedicate his most violent affection" to her, and proceeded forthwith "to pursue it with the most importunate addresses." He was then only about thirty-three. Richelieu was forty. If Buckingham was beautiful, Richelieu was inexorable—cold and stern as steel. Buckingham conducted Henrietta, his future Queen, part way and then stole back for another session with his quondam "queen," in spite of the fact that he had been warned that Richelieu would have him assassinated if he did so. But from that time on the Duke's advances to the French Queen met with rebuff and are alleged to have played no minor part among the causes of the war with France which followed.

The war retarded considerably the exploitation of the American fur trade. Twenty years went by, and the Hundred Associates were holding to their tenuous monopoly, which was being slowly undermined by the English from Virginia and Massachusetts, and by the Dutch from New York. Quebec, starving from neglect, but with the ever faithful Champlain buoying up its spirits, received word alternately of the approach of the English and of four French ships sent by the Company for their relief. He saw neither. The English captured or sank the French ships, and, misjudging the strength of Quebec, left its inhabitants to their miseries through the winter. In the summer, they found Champlain virtually alone in the fort and confiscated his store of peltries, and French Canada became British. But it did not remain so very long.

We return for a moment to the illicit love between Buckingham and the Queen of France. France still owed Charles a quarter million dollars for having taken pretty Henrietta to wife. To replenish his funds, Charles used the capture of Quebec as a lever by which he could force France to pay him the residue of Henrietta's dowry. Quebec was returned to France and Champlain was permitted to go back to die in his beloved Kebec.

Richelieu and Henry and Charles were not the first rulers to find the fur trade to their advantage. At the time that Cartier attempted to found a settlement at Tadoussac, Catherine de

Medici was playing fast and loose with the Syndic of the Furriers who held a very important position in the kingdom. Close to the royal house, the Furriers' syndicate represented wealth and power proportionately beyond anything the trade occupies to-day. It could arm a hundred thousand men to protect its interests, and the Syndic bought himself a seigniorship and affixed a *Sieur* before his name, and was part of the nobility even though he was not himself permitted to wear furs. The extent of the furrier's trade may be judged somewhat from the wealth attributed to the Syndic by Balzac, who tells us that when the old man, who had been for forty years head of the Guild of Furriers, retired, he sold out his interests to his head clerk for forty thousand livres down, a mortgage as security for the stock-in-trade, and twenty thousand livres on account. He then purchased a magnificent house of stone for his son as a wedding present, for which he paid two hundred and fifty thousand livres out of his own fortune, while the bride's father contributed an equal sum. The manor and estate in Picardy being a dependency of the Crown, letters patent from the King were necessary, and entailed the payment of considerable fines and fees. Nor could the marriage be entered into until the royal signature had been affixed to the contract, and the King and Queen dropped in at the Syndic's home in Paris as any friendly neighbor might, to sign the document. Then the King remitted the fines and fees as a wedding gift to the furrier's son.

With the inrush of furs from America governments sought to control the traffic by grants and monopoly. Monopolies in one form or another have always obtained, from Egypt, through the dominance of Tyre and Sidon, Carthage, down to the City Companies of London, the East India Companies, and the Standard Oil Trust. No merchant would think of risking a petty vessel with a year's provisions for a dozen men without first demanding feudal privileges in the New World. While fishermen on every hand risked larger ships and better men on the foggy Banks of Newfoundland without asking for the whole ocean of fish, no merchant would venture to erect a fort of native pines without

asking for the whole wilderness. This spirit of monopoly virtually dominated the early settlement of America, and the struggles of cliques and monopolies reverberated down the centuries through the Revolution and the winning of the west.

While from England the first settlers came with wide sweeping land grants, from France they came with grandiloquent privileges. One after another of the semi-noble French merchants succumbed to the illusion and the hope of great profits to be obtained from the fur-trade in America—La Roche, Roberval, de Monts, Poutrincourt. Their names mean little or nothing to us now. The names of their sea captains and explorers, Cartier, Champlain, La Salle, Duluth ring clear. For a hundred years, monopolist after monopolist reached his hands out across the sea, built a little fort, cleared a bit of ground, cached some packs of peltries, and returned to find his monopoly denounced, withdrawn and bankruptcy besetting his doddering footsteps. The rocky Isle of Demons and the fertile pastures of Acadia, the sweeping Laurentides and the bearded lakes of the Iroquois and the Hurons—all felt themselves for a moment in the Midas hands of the monopolists, only to find conflicting claimants enter the challenge of privilege by privilege.

Cartier had a nephew and another young man whose claims to nepotistic rights were dubious. These two declared the monopoly in furs in America was theirs. But the free-traders and the fishermen of St. Malo, as we have seen, burned several boats belonging to them "and took up arms to ruin all they had done." De Monts came along and began digging himself into the new continent, but instead he buried nearly a hundred thousand livres in the wilderness. His monopoly was a failure. Pontgrave, already familiar with life in America from the time when as a young man he made profitable trading expeditions to the St. Lawrence, had a falling-out with Biencourt, the young and impetuous son of Poutrincourt when they were at Port Royal. Banished from the settlement for some misdemeanor, he moved up the St. Johns River to trade on his own. The monopoly next fell to him as Poutrincourt was forced to lay it aside; only in due

time to end in failure. With Champlain, Pontgrave set out in two of de Monts' vessels for Tadoussac. Pontgrave arrived to find some Basques trading with the Indians. They had already acquired a considerable number of furs which Pontgrave claimed as his because of the monopoly. The Basques challenged him, captured him, and he was not released till Champlain arrived.

In each and every case, the monopoly granted was couched in long-winded declarations and avowals of high and devout purpose. Not only did the period extend for many years, but the furs were to enter free of duty, and when the authorities of Caen confiscated some twenty-two bales of beaver skins because of customs charges, de Monts raised a hullabaloo till it reached the ears of the king. Squabbles became rife, and the scramble for skins increased as the pressure of restriction lowered. Basques, fishermen, derilect trappers circumvented the monopolists, and monopolists from England and Holland undermined those of France. This competition greatly increased the cost of skins from fifty sous to ten livres, to the delight and enhancement of the Indians. "These people," bewails Lescarbot naïvely, "eager to get the beaver skins of that country, go there for no other purpose; and so compete with each other, that they have caused every beaver skin (which is the chief traffic of these regions) to be worth here today ten livres, when they might have been sold for one-half that price, if the traffic therein had been limited to one person." So greedy were they become for skins that they took to rifling the graves of the Indian chiefs for the sake of the beaver robes buried with them.

Through all these ups and downs of monopolists there remained the steadfast courage and persistence of Samuel de Champlain. No sooner was one forced to give up his privileges than Champlain found another patron to catch the gleam of his vision. When de Monts failed, he secured the patronage of the Comte de Soissons, and upon his death, that of the Prince de Condé. But he saw from the first the ruinous effects this haphazard seeking of riches would have upon his dreams of empire and of colonization. He pointed out in 1610 that competition was

undermining the prospects of settlement. The merchants of France, in defiance of the grant of the king, sent across vessels laden with merchandise for the Indian trade, little thinking that so many shiploads of goods would glut the simple market. The nomadic Indians could carry few possessions with them on their hunting trips, and their taste was whimsical. Novelty more than use enticed them, and indolence soon overcame even the craving for the new. In consequence they were less and less eager to give their peltries away for trifles.

Champlain, seeking permanent achievement in the New World rather than personal gain or praise, yearned to counteract this demoralizing situation. "The desire which I have always had of making new discoveries in New France, for the good, profit, and glory of the French name," he says with just impatience, "and at the same time to lead the poor natives to the knowledge of God, has led me to seek more and more for the greater facility of this undertaking, which can only be secured by means of good regulations. For, since individuals desire to gather the fruits of my labor without contributing to the expenses and great outlays requisite for the support of the settlements necessary for a successful result, this branch of trade is ruined by the greediness of gain, which is so great that it causes merchants to set out prematurely in order to arrive first in this country. By this means they not only become involved in the ice, but also in their own ruin, for, from trading with the savages in a secret manner and offering through rivalry with each other more merchandise than is necessary, they get the worst of the bargain. Thus, while purposing to deceive their associates, they generally deceive themselves."

As a matter of fact, Champlain was deceiving himself. He was eager for colonists, while the monopolists, promising to settle the lands, were not over-anxious to send out too many people, too many mouths to feed, too many individuals who could gain a skin here or a peltry there. De Monts, for example, had received a grant from Henry IV of "a new territory, of which the imaginary limits would extend in our times from Philadelphia to beyond Montreal." How could he hope to settle this and yet retain

his exclusive rights to the fur trade? Yet, where there are privileges there must also be obligations. The monopoly was granted on condition that the savages would be converted, that all but French Catholics be excluded, and that not less than four thousand inhabitants would be transported within the first fifteen years. These settlers were to be cared for for the first three years and given land to clear for their very own. Yet the company began with the petty sum of three hundred thousand livres, not more than \$60,000 in our money, or enough to supply Cardinal Richelieu with food for his elaborate tables for two years. Naturally, the only colonists they shipped overseas were jailbirds, idlers, and prostitutes.

When things had become about as badly muddled and neglected as possible, and Champlain had for the twentieth time returned to France to seek aid, conditions in Europe became stabilized under the iron hand of Richelieu. Henry IV had partially succeeded in tempering power with liberality at home, and religious toleration with reason in international affairs, and it became possible for France to look to decent settlement overseas with some sense of safety. But in 1610, while Champlain was striving with all his might to build a secure foundation for his settlement at Quebec, the hand of an assassin brought down Henry IV, and with it the hope of Europe and of America. Champlain's friend and patron lay dead. The slow, fierce, and reactionary ascendancy of Richelieu was begun. And two decades were to go by before something of greater significance was to happen to Champlain's enterprises.

Trade rivalries and jealousies over the right to furs checked him at every turn in his labors as maker of maps and namer and claimer of New France. Tied up as he was with the fur interests, whose benefits he had at all times to consider, devising strategic situations through which the channels of the trade were kept open, there was never a moment in which Champlain was not subjected to all the hardships of a nomad, while he was planning and rearing the structure of a great state. Thirty years of toil, fighting, going far out of his way to save a white man from Indian torture

while greedy fur-hunters were snatching the blood-stained beaver-skins from the writhing bodies of the wounded; hurrying back to France to plead with Charles de Bourbon to take over the fur trade himself for the sake of New France; trying to stem the tide of fur-traders who rushed in from all sides—yet always dreaming of new routes and trying out old ones for the sake of the undying hope of a water-way to China.

The Dutch at New Amsterdam were already up as far as Albany; the Puritans in Massachusetts had encroached inch by inch upon New England; the Virginia gentlemen were hoeing tobacco patches on the Potomac. . . . Champlain lay dead in Quebec. It was 1635.

§

In our day, we seem to look upon dictators as though they were strangers in the world of politics. But we have only to look closely at the career of Armand Jean du Plessis de Richelieu to see how tame our Mussolinis, Lenins, and Chang-so-Lins are by comparison.

Richelieu was a weakly lad of twenty-one turning from a military career for which his health unsuited him to the bishopric of Lucon in the very year that Champlain was planting the feeble shoots of Quebec on the St. Lawrence. Twenty years later, in 1628, he was the mightiest minister in Europe. The intrigue, the conspiracies, the adroit and remarkable feats of statesmanship which he accomplished under the century of influence of Machiavellism that separated morals from politics at the same time that it strengthened the union of religion and politics, cannot be even touched upon here. These years of Europe's torment concern us only in so far as they affect the fur-trade in America.

"The king himself quailed before that stern, august presence. His pale, drawn face was set with his iron will. His frame was sickly and wasted with disease, yet when clad in his red cardinal's robes, his stately carriage and confident bearing gave him the air of a prince. . . . No courtier was ever more assertive of his prerogatives. He claimed precedence over even princes of the

blood, and one like Condé was content to draw aside the curtains for him to pass, and to sue for the hand of Richelieu's niece for his son, the 'Great Condé.' "

Richelieu had France in his clutch, and Europe vibrated to his every thought. Now he turned with the same implacable determination to sway the fortunes of the New World. The "Company of New France" against the merchants of which Champlain had complained, were men of Paris, Rouen, Dieppe, Bordeaux. Their mutually destructive tactics were to be done away with under Richelieu. As Grand Master and Superintendent of Navigation and Commerce, and head of the new company of one hundred associates, he devised rules and schemes for the exploitation of the fur trade. There was nothing between Florida and Hudson's Bay that was not turned over to them, and the absolute monopoly of the fur trade which, after a century of pursuit, seemed more than ever to draw the most important people with its allurements.

Trying to divert the interests of the hangers-on at Court and others from mere office holding, and to encourage the rising bourgeoisie in wider fields of commerce, Richelieu, in 1629, issued an ordinance—"in order to invite our subjects of every rank and condition to apply themselves to commerce and traffic by sea and to let them know it is our intention to raise and honor those who will thus occupy themselves." Men were no longer to lose their rank if they engaged in trade and commerce, and such commoners as would keep for five years on the high seas a vessel built in France, of two or three hundred tons, he proffered the privileges of nobility. France was to move out into the big world, and the roots of monopoly and privilege were to be safely transplanted in North America.

When first the French settled at Port Royal they reported that as many as five hundred French ships were visiting America, and the authorities were urged to build forts to protect them in the harbors. Tadoussac alone was frequently cheered by the presence of twenty or more ships at a time. But as soon as the Company was formed with its Hundred Associates, there were seldom more than two at a time, and these their ships only. "I was told," wrote

Father Lalemant, "that during one year they carried back as many as 22,000 (beaver skins). The usual number for one year is 15,000 or 12,000, at one pistole each, which is not doing badly."

Lalemant had taken up his mission in Canada, beginning at Acadia, and going to Quebec in 1625. He at once dispatched Father Noyrot to Richelieu with a full report on conditions there, urging that Canada be rid of the Huguenots, and the result of this report was the formation of the Hundred Associates. But doom attended his labors, for Lalemant was shortly afterwards captured by Admiral Kirk and carried to England. Two years later he was shipwrecked in an effort to reach Canada again and was brought back to France by a Basque fishing vessel. Canada momentarily changed hands and became British, and beavers had a respite. But even later the Hundred Associates did little to people the new lands.

After the return of Canada to France, the Jesuits had the field to themselves unhampered. Their first important missionary, Father Le Jeune, arrived in 1632, and by 1635 he was writing enthusiastically of the assistance the Company was giving them, crediting them with the spending of great sums "either upon the country or upon their establishments." It was mainly for the latter. Few people arrived to carry on the necessary labors.

Against this the Jesuits complained constantly. There were too many people in France anyway, "for, although the soil of our country is very fertile, the French women have this blessing, that they are still more so; and thence it happens that our ancient Gauls, in want of land, went to seek it in different parts of Europe. At present, our French people are no less numerous than our old Gauls; but they do not go forth in bands, but separately. Would it not be better to empty Old France into New, by means of Colonies, than to people Foreign countries?" Le Jeune points out that lack of employment in France forces people to "beg their bread from door to door," and shows how immense New France could relieve that suffering. But "this does not mean that ruined people, or those of evil lives, should be sent here, for that would be to build Babylons."

Slowly this infiltration went on of its own accord. By 1645 the little colony had outgrown the Hundred Associates, and took over the government of Canadian affairs, with the promise to pay the Company a thousand pounds of beaver skins a year. Champlain had won. For ten years his body had lain mouldering in the ground, but there rose above him a little city (Quebec) which, though it is to-day under British rule, is Canadian in spirit, French in body, and Champlainese in mind. Had it not been for monopoly it might still be French in spirit, mind and body. But Frenchmen loved France too much to leave it, and after the English captured Canada, felt with Voltaire, who said: "I am like the public. I love peace much more than Canada and I believe that France can be happy without Quebec."

Still there is a touch of pathos in the situation. Centralization, homogeneity, exclusiveness all met their Waterloo in the fluent, intangible democracy of the wilderness. Against this, monopoly could not long endure. Puzzled, disappointed, France wonders with her great historian, Guizot, why it must be so.

"It is the glory and the misfortune of France," wrote Guizot, "to always lead the van in the march of civilization, without having the wit to profit by the discoveries and the sagacious boldness of her children. On the unknown roads which she has opened to the human mind and to human enterprise she has often left the fruits to be gathered by nations less inventive and less able than she, but more persevering and less perturbed by a confusion of desires and an incessant renewal of hopes."

We shall see when we study the British monopolists whether that is strictly true or not.

CHAPTER XI

The Pilgrims Are Coming

HAD not the Norman Conquest turned the forests of England over to the personal control of the king there would have been no Robin Hood. Had not the king passed his laws about poaching there might not have been any Shakespeare. King Canute, famed for his modesty in the presence of the sea, sacrificed his reputation by an edict against hunting. "I will," he said, "that every man be worthy of his hunting in wood and field on his own estate. And let every man abstain from my hunting: look, wherever I will that it should be freed, under full penalty."

Between the Conquest and the death of Shakespeare many a man paid for his daring with his life if he ventured to pot a rabbit on a nobleman's domains. The decade after the sailing of the Pilgrims the reach of the royal forests came to include virtually the whole country. Noblemen were nearly ruined by the confiscation of their estates in this process, and enormous fines were imposed on trespassers. Lord Salisbury was amerced at \$100,000, and Lord Westmoreland and others at sums not much less. Everything that harbored a hare had been dedicated to the pleasure of the king, and Henry I was such an insatiable hunter that he held some of his most important state councils while on the chase.

If it was so dangerous for a man to store a rabbit in his belly how much more dangerous must it have been to expose one's crime by adorning the body in a weasel skin. "All virtues lodge in royal ermine." Weasel for the king, beaver for the wealthy, and hair shirts for the pious for their praise of the chase. Chaucer, thinking of the diatribes against the use of luxurious furs, declares of the Monk:

"He yaf nat of that text a pulled hen,
That seith, that hunters been nat holy men."

The good old rule of St. Benedict went by the board. Hunting, like the wearing of fur, was become the symbol of power, extended somewhat to the soldier by the cylindrical headdress of bear or raccoon worn to this day by hussars and Royal Horse Artillery and nicknamed "busby." Down to the advent of the Puritans in America, the taboo on the forests was most strictly enforced, and one might almost say that the Fathers came not so much to worship God in their own way as to hunt for beaver and other denizens of the forests without the limitations of the land-owners. They were ready to stake all "for the glory of Christ and the advancement of the beaver trade," as John Masefield tells us, for they knew only too well how hard it was to keep an Englishman from the chase and keep him holy.

The protection of the forests of England was not alone for the sake of their humble little inhabitants. It was for the forests themselves, as the too rapid felling of trees was creating industrial havoc in England. The iron works of London were banished in 1581 to beyond twenty-two miles of the city for lack of fuel. It was not till 1621 that Lord Edward Dudley invented a way of saving fuel. Unless the art of forestry were better understood, this consumption of wood would imperil shipping. The country that had access to America with its vast forests would naturally soon have the best navy and merchant marine, and these meant safe tapping of the furs of the wilderness and the riches of the Orient. As the restrictions on the English forests drew tighter, thought of the exploitation of the American forests grew more alluring, and the law became a double-barrelled weapon, conserving and expanding the power of England and challenging the security of France.

Every explorer brought back rumors of the profits of the fur trade in America. David Ingram, one of Hawkins' companions, after escaping from the Spaniards in the Gulf of Mexico, made his way along the coast to Maine and was brought back to Europe by a French fur-trader. The story of his experiences glowed with



Indian trappers of the North West

reports "of dyvers sortes of fyne furies" to be found there. Bartholomew Gosnold went in all secrecy to the regions around New England in 1602 to determine the value of the fur trade, for the monopoly had been granted Sir Walter Raleigh. News of his voyage leaked out because of the drop in the market price of sassafras, a cargo of which he brought back, and he enlarged most enthusiastically on the number of wild fur-bearers roaming the forests—"Wilde-cat skinnnes very large and deepe Furies. . . . Deere skinnnes very large" and all the furry tribes ofsylvania. Martin Pring went over next year for sassafras but remained behind because of the "wild beasts, whose Cases and Furies being hereafter purchased by exchange may yeeld no smal gaine to us. Since as we are certainly informed, the Frenchmen brought from Canada the value of thirtie thousand Crownes in the yeare 1604. Almost in Beuers and Otters skinnnes only." In 1605, George Weymouth, whose voyage, purposes and plans are shrouded in obscurity, visited Maine where he sought to induce the Indians to traffic in furs. We have his own words for it that he urged the natives by signs to bring him skins in order "to bring them to an understanding of exchange, and that they might conceiue the intent of our comming to them to be for no other end." The understanding of exchange, however, was not meant to be very thorough, and "for kniues, glasses, combes and other trifles to the valew of foure or fiue shillings, we had 40 good Beauers skins, Otters skins, Sables, and other small skins."

Reports of the success of the French in Acadia brought Samuel Argal thither, and the first blow of the English in behalf of the fur trade was struck. Finally comes Captain John Smith to Virginia, on behalf of certain London merchants who had evidently succumbed to his enthusiasm for furs. In Smith's description of New England, a document of only about thirty-five pages, he makes four or five extensive references to the furs and fishes of the region. "For our Golde," he declares, "it was rather the Masters device to get a voyage that projected it, then any knowledge he had at all of any such matter. Fish and Furies was now our guard. . . . Whilest the sailers fished, my selfe with eight

or nine others of them might best be spared. Ranging the coast in a small boat, we got for trifles neer 1100 Beaver skinnes, 100 Martins, and neer as many Otters."

Smith found the French his worst competitors, because of whom "our commodities were not esteemed" by the Indians. "Right against us in the Main" was Sir Francis Popham who had spent, he says, many years in the porte, and forty leagues west were two more French ships. Ten pages further on he waxes exceeding warm over the prospects; and his bristling imagination turns to the possibilities of raising muskrats in Virginia. "Of Bevers, Otters and Martins, blacke Foxes and Furies of price, may yeerly be had six or seven thousand, and if the trade of the French were prevented, many more." Considering that he got fifty skins worth \$250 for one single copper kettle, one may forgive him his ardor. They usually asked about twenty beaver skins for one musket, so that a musket sold for \$500.

The Virginia Company, which was shy of admitting the Pilgrims to their American domains nevertheless sent Thomas Dermer in 1615, 1618-19 and 1621 to spy out the activities of the Dutch, from whom no doubt the Pilgrims got their enthusiasm for America. The English were slowly creeping up the coast to New France. Christopher Levett, with a grant of six thousand acres of his own choosing, determined to settle in Portland harbor. Here a Sagamore chief befriended him, giving him a beaver skin, but cautiously declined to trade because of a Mr. Witheridge also in the bay. Levett, determined to dig in, sent for "the Sagamores, who came, and after some complements they told me I must be their cozen, and the Captaine Gorges was so (which you may imagine I was not a little proud of, to be adopted cozen to so many great Kings at one instant, but did willingly accept of it), and so passing away a little time pleasantly, they desired to be gone, whereupon I told tham that I understood they had some cmoates and Beauers skins which I desired to truck for but they were unwilling, and I seemed careless of it (as men must doe if they desire any thing of them). But at last Somerset swore that there should be none carryed out of the harbor, but his cozen

Levett should haue all, and then they began to offer me some by way of gift, but I would taken none but one paire of sleeues from Cogawesco, but told them it was not the fashion of English Capitaines alwaies to be taking, but sometimes to take and giue, and continually to truck was very good. But in fine, we had all except one coate and two skinnes, which they reserved to pay an old debt with, but they staying all that night, had them stole from them." Diligent search for the thieves made the Indians even more friendly and they tried to induce Levett to settle among them. He moved up the harbor with the king and escort, not excluding the dog, and, making the acquaintance of an impressive queen, chose her lands as his future home.

But the Pilgrims are coming, and the story changes its tone and significance. America has at last found a group of people wanting the land for its own sake, to plow and to fructify, not merely to enrich a few gentlemen in Europe. Fur, fishes and lumber proved worthy lodestones, justifying the movements of most every settler in this direction. "The Plymouth Pilgrims," says Frederick J. Turner, "settled in Indian cornfields, and their first return cargo was of beaver and lumber. The records of the various New England colonies show how steadily exploration was carried into the wilderness by this trade. What is true for New England, is, as would be expected, even plainer for the rest of the colonies."

Ten years after the founding of the settlement, the Rev. Stephen Higginson wrote that it was "almost incredible" how much profit they made from corn. "Every bushel was by him (the planter) sold and trusted to the Indians for so much Beaver as was worth 18 shillings . . . where you may see how God blesseth husbandry in this land." It has been estimated that this meant a gain of about \$6,500 on an investment of about \$6.50. Thus was this small, impecunious cluster of people, clinging to the soil, heartened in its enterprise, without which they would hardly have been able to tide themselves over the first years of their entrenchment. Three years after Plymouth was settled, Bradford received a visit from Thomas Weston on Massachusetts Bay asking for

furs. His appeal was denied, and Bradford declared "it were enoughe to make a mutinie among y^e people" if he had given him any. The Plymouth people themselves went to the Kennebec to trade in furs. It was for a time virtually their only way of settling their debt with the company in England that outfitted them.

Within fifteen years the colonists were forced to go deeper and deeper into the wilderness to secure their beavers. None escaped the contagion, neither Pilgrim, Puritan, nor Pagan. Wealth was increasing. The servant of Thomas Morton, a trader, "was thought to have a 1000.p. in ready gold gotten by beaver when hee dyed; whatsoever became of it." And "very many old planters have gained good estates out of small beginnings by means thereof." So large did the traffic loom in their eyes "that Jasons golden Fleece was either the same, or some other Fleece not of so much value." Envious of the Dutch who had "gained by Beaver 20000. pound a yeare," and antagonistic to "both the French and the English who have lived wholly by it," the New Englanders sought to reach out into the Hudson Valley and the Lakes in order to "gleane away the best of the Beaver" from them all. The Hudson River, the Connecticut, the Merrimack,—all became tributaries to the increasing wealth of the Puritans. Winslow, Bradford, Winthrop—all became conspirators for the diversion of the beaver from the Dutch and French. Boston, Concord, Springfield, all the villages along the route to the interior became trading posts, according to Bradford, "by keeping a house ther, to receive y^e trad when it came down out of y^e inland." And "It pleased y^e Lord to inable them this year to send home a great quantity of beaver" at the expense of some 3,300 industrious little beasts. Their object was to cut off the flow of skins to the Dutch and control the Connecticut region themselves.

So lucrative was this trade that even at the risk of cutting themselves off "from all the Churches of Christ in the Massachusetts Government" they moved on into the interior. A certain magistrate by the name of Pinchin betook himself far up the river to a place called "Springfield" which was "fitly seated for a Bever trade with the Indians" and is to this day being celebrated for his

daring. It was not long, however, before so many others came for the same purpose that they "erected a Town and Church of Christ" and began "to live upon husbandry." This was in 1645.

By 1657 the general court of Massachusetts determined to control the fur trade by law. The French were delighted to find that this encroachment on the Dutch was leading their enemies into open warfare. Peter Stuyvesant received complaint against Pinchin, and carried this to the New England confederation. Not till this ruthless, careless, wholesale destruction of the beaver shifted the scene did any peace occur.

The Dutch who had welcomed and prospered the Pilgrims in Holland had occasion to regret their hospitality when they met again in New Amsterdam-England. Between the Puritans and the Jesuits, the free-thinking Dutch were doomed to destruction.

How powerful an alchemist is time! Names that in cradle days of men's aspirations smelled of the forge, with its burning hoof, or clattered with the click of the shuttle, become mellowed by time into symbols to conjure with. Smith, Skinner, Weaver become Governor, Silk-merchant, and Greenback nominee for President. Who would associate Van Rensselaer with beavers, yet that diamond merchant did not disdain intimate association with these inhabitants of the swamps of New York. Peter Minuit gave the Indians some sixty guilders' worth of beads for Manhattan Island, built some fur-trading huts on its lower lip, and then moved up the Hudson to Fort Orange (Albany) where was founded one of the most important fur-trading posts in America. Through these settlements the Dutch East India Company drove a spigot into the fur preserves of England and France and drew off 4,000 beaver skins and 700 otter skins, worth 27,000 guilders, while the Pilgrims were merely salting cod. In 1634 they secured 15,000 beavers, 1,500 otters, worth 134,000 guilders. While in 1656, 35,000 beaver skins passed in review before the governor of New Amsterdam, to the glory and the prosperity of New Netherlands.

Still, there were only little drops of civilization here and there in the New World. A hut or two on Manhattan Island, another

on Castle Island, a third on the Delaware River, a fourth at Hartford on the Connecticut, and so on, with further privileges of extending these roosting places to anywhere between Newfoundland and the Straits of Magellan. But for the beaver, we might now be addressing our petitions to Governor Olden Barnevelt, Beverwyck, New Amsterdam, instead of to Governor Alfred Smith, Albany. The conquest of New Amsterdam was precipitated by the beaver trade. While the Burghers of Hartford complained to Governor Stuyvesant and Stuyvesant complained to Bradford, the Dutch fought among themselves and nagged the India Company in behalf of Brer Beaver, who was too busy to note what was going on.

The patroons and the Company soon came to an open breach. Men were taking up marshes and woodlands for settlement, driving the beavers further and further back. The Company was vanquished, the fur trade was in ruins, and the monopoly was abandoned in 1638. Then the fur trade came to life again for a spell, but long before the end of the century the people slipped out of the colonies so fast that labor became scarce, and the very existence of New Amsterdam all the way to Albany was threatened. Depopulation followed the trappers who followed the furbearers into the wilderness.

One of the first things the English did after they conquered the Dutch in 1664 was to try to regulate the fur trade with the Indians. By 1684 it was hoped it would be a city monopoly. Governor Dongan declared that unless the Indians were won over, they would "ruine all ye Kings Collonyes in those Parts of America . . . we must build forts in ye countrey upon ye great Lake, as ye french doe, otherwise we loose ye Countrey, the Bever trade and our Indians."

The fur trade was rotting and undermining imperialistic pretensions in America. There was always an escape by way of the wilderness. The monopoly in the hands of a company in Holland or London could not prevent New York merchants from selling goods to Frenchmen who in turn bartered with the Indians for furs. In 1720, Robert Livingston, Secretary for Indian affairs,

advised the acting governor, Peter Schuyler at Albany, "That a stop be made for 3 months for all Indian goods going to Canada." But neither confiscation, fine nor imprisonment was able to put a check to the traffic.

They turned to a counter process of peaceful penetration to undermine the position of the French. But the illicit trading went on. It must be admitted that some historical names were involved in the smuggling of furs. Phillip Schuyler's son Nicholas was arrested on October 28, 1725. Used to comfort, Nicholas naturally relished little the prospect of extended residence in jail, sans bedding and other refinements. Softened by his appeals, his captors headed for the Sheriff's own house instead of prison, but, sad to relate, Nicholas burst from them and escaped. Nothing could ever again persuade Nicholas to head for jail—not even a room in the Sheriff's home. It was not till two years had gone by that he and Jacob Wendell submitted themselves to the law. In November, 1727, Schuyler and Wendell "having traded with the French contrary to the Laws of this colony, are ready and willing to pay Each of them the Sum of one hundred pounds for such their Transgression."

The law required a declaration on oath of the amount of dutiable goods which had been handled and on which tax was to be paid. Another notable, Phillip Livingston, was likewise charged with illicit trade the following year. Evert Wendell avows that Livingston would not take the oath unless he were permitted to make some reservations. This was denied him. Whereupon, says Wendell, "I heard Livingston answered the recorder . . . (that) it was noting but Spite and malice and Severals more heard words which I cann not Justly remember which the Said Livingston did Spoke." Livingston refused to permit them to enter his refusal in the books, and they were equally determined that the entry should be made. Thereupon, Livingston stuck the book in his bosom and strutted forth from the court house.

Next we find Elizabeth Schuyler standing guard at the cellar door to prevent the serving of a summons on her husband, who had locked himself within. After knocking and having no one

answer him, the Sheriff, who could hear people inside, slipped the summons under the door of Johannes Cuyler's house. When he had got nine yards away, the door flew open and the summons was flung back after him.

The struggle was coming to a point. The Indians saw that they were being prevented from trading freely according to their own best interests; the Boston, New York, and Albany merchants felt themselves restrained from a legitimate trade by the absentee monopolists; the imperialists saw only glorious profits denied them by the petty merchants and trappers. The maelstrom called the Seven Years' War was on in earnest.

CHAPTER XII

Monopoly Eat Monopoly

THE English were storming the coast from Maine to Georgia. The Puritan exiles and the Dutch burghers were, inch by inch, whittling away at the continent. The French were sweeping through the Canadian wilds in seven-league boots, describing ever-widening circles toward the plains. The Frenchman loved the country. He moved like a thing released from captivity, now and again flinging aside vast holdings for the sake of greater adventure, greater range. Just, sound, constructive as was the foundation of the commonwealths in Virginia and New England with their more democratic tendencies, they had none of the dashing, breezy air of freedom that went with the devil-may-care explorations of the French. The very airiness of their adventures doomed their empire in the New World.

Two men, by temperament a prey to loyalty, yet always guided by opportunity, came, through this sheer love of motion, to have a most far-reaching effect upon the history of America. In eastern France, somewhere in the region of the Marne, was born one Nedart Chouart, better known for three centuries as Groseilliers. He appeared on the American scene in 1637 as an assistant to the Jesuit Mission at Huron and moved to Three Rivers thirteen years later. In 1653, he married the widowed sister of Pierre Esprit Radisson, and soon became the partner in adventure and trade of his brother-in-law to such a close and indissoluble degree that they have come down in history as a sort of firm—Radisson and Groseilliers—the type and promise of the successful *coureur de bois* for all time. Far and wide they roamed together, hunting, trapping, exploring, scheming,—restless with brilliant self-assurance, amassing considerable sums of wealth in furs. Bold and independent of spirit, they ran counter to the greed of the

French monopolists and were imprisoned and fined for illicit trading. The moment they were released, they took to the trail again, but this time under the ægis of the English, having transferred their nationality in England, and became instrumental in the development of the Hudson's Bay Company which finally ousted the French from Canada. A page out of their journal is like a composite page out of some great odyssey, a story of knight-hood, the "Book of Marco Polo," with a dash of the wording of the Bible.

"We embarked ourselves on the delightfulest lake of the world," says Radisson. "I took notice of their Cottages (wigwams) and of the journeys of our navigation, for because that the country was so pleasant, so beautiful and fruitful that it grieved me to see that the world could not discover such inticing countrys to live in. This I say because that the Europeans fight for a rock in the sea against one another, or for a sterill land and horrid country, that the people sent heere or there by the chagement of the aire ingenders sicknesse and dies thereof. Contrarywise those kingdoms are so delicious and under so temperat a climat, plentifull of all things, the earth bringing foorth its fruit twice a yeare, the people live long and lusty and wise in their way. What conquest would that bee att litle or no cost; what labrointh of pleasure should millions of people have, instead that millions complaine of misery and poverty! . . . It's true, I confesse, that the accesse is difficult, but must say that we are like the Cockscombs of Paris, when first they begin to have wings, imagining that the larks will fall in their mouths roasted; but we ought (to remember) that vertue is not acquired without labour and taking great paines. . . . The further we sojourned the delightfuller the land was to us. I can say that (in) my lifetime I never saw a more incomparable country, for all I have been in Italy; yett Italy comes short of it, as I think, when it was inhabited, and now forsaken of the wildmen."

The country has no inaccessible spots to Radisson and Groseilliers. They glide through sylvan fastnesses like a light unto themselves, and emerge upon the treeless prairies like gnomes on a

spree, enticing the wary Indian to "the goeing down to the French" at Montreal or Three Rivers, with their packs of dried peltries. The Indians become attached to them. They plead with them to remain through the year, but Groseilliers is ill, and Radisson will not think of it. The Indians promise that if they will remain they will send their children down to be baptized, but the "brothers" reply that there would be only dead to be baptized if they do not go for supplies. The Indians say they fear the Hurons, and Radisson chides them for their chicken-heartedness. Frenchmen fight with their arms, not with robes, says Radisson, and with a grand gesture, the two brothers say they will brook the Hurons by themselves. Seeing that they are determined to go, the Indians hold another council. The Frenchmen win.

"The young people tooke very ill that you have beaten them with the skin," say the savages. "All avowed to die like men and undertake the journey." And so they "go down to the French." At once the order for the journey is given. "Yee women gett your bundles ready. They goe to gett wherewithall to defend themselves and you alive." Five hundred strong set out with "a great store of castors' skins."

For three years the brothers have been away from home and friends, and one may well imagine their hearts as they make this final plunge through the wilderness. When they arrive, Radisson, who has only a sister, admits a sense of envy of Groseilliers to whom she is wife. But there are compensations.

"What fairer bastion than a good tongue," he avows, "especially when one sees his owne chimney smoak, or when we can kiss our owne wives or kisse our neighbor's wife with ease and delight? It is a strange thing when victualls are wanting, worke whole nights and dayes, lye downe on the bare ground, and not allwayes that hap, the breech in the water, the feare in the buttocks, to have the belly empty, the wearinesse in the bones, and drowsinesse of the body by the weather that you are to suffer, having nothing to keepe you from such calamity."

Here is not the heroic language of the study, the romance of the library. Here are men who know fear and do not fear to show

it. Most of the traveling is done by night, for the enemy lurks in every copse and shadow. Guides at night are uncertain quantities, and food even more so. By day a friendly Indian warns them of eyes on the lookout for plunder. Here they pause to mourn the loss of comrades on a previous journey; there the Indians have found out packs of skins they cached the year before. Bears come down for drink and furnish them with meat; otters prey on shoals of fish in the river, and impede their progress, as if, says Radisson, they had gathered in congress to greet them. "There are fishes as bigg as children of two years old. . . . It is delightful to goe along the side of the watter in summer where you may pluck the ducks."

Men so enamored of their wild life are not easily frustrated. The French monopolists, counting without their hosts, prick a saint and find a savage when they arrest these men. They have drunk of the air of freedom, and loyalty is loyalty, as faithful to the new revelation as the old tradition. The new revelation is that a continent is to be won to civilization, not restricted to the aggrandizement of absentee profiteers. France, blinded by prospects of empire, offends the god of adventure. Radisson and Groseilliers, knowing about as much as anyone the regions of the New World, toss the whole Hudson's Bay region into the lap of England.

England was not early interested in the fur possibilities of this country. She was engaged too fully in the exploitation of India where wealth more to her liking and of an easier disposition was perverting the ascetic instincts of the people. The discovery and control of Sumatra peppers by the Dutch had so increased the cost of that preserving spice that England was compelled to find a source of supply of her own, and the result was the formation in 1600 of the British East India Company. But peppering old meat was only second in importance to the necessity of salting fresh fish. Vying with the Dutch in the herring industry had given England a predominance in maritime achievement that extended to the Indies—and parenthetically took in Newfoundland. It was therefore not till some sixty years after the British got a foothold in

India that the forbidding region of Hudson's Bay began to loom up as a practical possibility.

But by that time France had already extended her sway over North America far beyond the Great Lakes, even to the Mississippi. Within the century and a half between the beginning and the end of French New World power, the fur trade rivalries waxed keener and keener. So sharp had it become that the French company bought wildly every skin within reach and burned the surplus rather than glut the market or let any furs fall into the hands of the English. This led almost inevitably to the simultaneous triumph of England at Quebec and Plassey in the middle of the eighteenth century. But the steps thereto are worth noting.

Cromwell's ascension had driven the greater portion of the English nobility to France, where, at St. Germain-en-Laye they fidgeted away their days, vaguely longing to return to power, listening to all the glowing reports of the fur trade in America which might easily relieve them from the humiliation of living on the bounty of the French court and, in part at least, restore their wasted fortunes. Charles II, returning to power, was still a pensioner of the king of France. Through his correspondence with the general of the Jesuits in Rome, he knew what was going on in America. At the same time, among the group of exiles in France was Prince Rupert, cousin of Charles, who, as commander of the forces of Charles I, was wiser than the cause he championed. One would imagine that gratitude to France for this long succor would have weakened their commercial jealousy of their benefactors. But hardly had they returned to England when they at once availed themselves of every opportunity to undermine the prestige of France in America.

But their knowledge of the interior of North America was very limited. The Puritans were no nomads. They came to settle, and in their settlements they remained. They were pressing hard against the French from the south and instigating the Iroquois to circumvent them in the lake region. But only by encircling them could their further expansion be checked. Luck was with them.

Radisson and Groseilliers arrived in a huff in England, gained the ear of Prince Rupert, who at once dispatched the Yankee sailor Gillam who happened to be in port, to check up on their statements about the fur possibilities in the Hudson's Bay region.

The "friendly arctic" had till then not heard the sound of shot, nor seen the pageantry of human folly dance its fur-clad crimson ballet over its snowy wastes. No prayer had ever been heard there since the creation of the world. In the great silences, amidst the bleak and ragged granite walls of Labrador only the whip-like cracking of the ice had ever mustered grizzly bears. Caribou, in countless number, roamed these unnamed regions, drank from nameless lakes, and trudged unmarked trails whose crossroads bore no sign-posts. Gillam scanned the Straits of Hudson, dropped down a stream, and hung up the shingle of—Prince Rupert. The northern world was no longer nameless.

Inasmuch as they had no way of taking inventory, the new claimants to this unknown world generalized. By virtue of Hudson's discovery, England deemed her rights inviolable. What if sixty years had gone by without anyone so much as thinking about it! What though Radisson and Groseilliers had the year before visited the region and given France some tangible claim to it? Charles needed money, and the furs of the territory were promising. All he asked of Rupert for his signature to the charter was "two elks and two black beavers." "Our dearly beloved Prince Rupert" would no doubt remember his king of his own accord. And so a charter was granted to the prince and a few of his friends on May 2, 1670, incorporating them as "The Governor and Company of Adventurers of England Trading into Hudson's Bay."

Lest there might be some misunderstanding as to where they were to trade, their charter was specific. It was to be in "all those seas, straits, bays, rivers, lakes, creeks, and sounds, in whatsoever latitude they shall be, that lie within the entrance to the straits commonly called Hudson's Straits, together with all the lands and territories upon the countries, coasts and confines of the seas, bays, aforesaid, that are not already actually possessed by the subjects of any other Christian prince or state." Inasmuch as

Radisson and Groseilliers had been seeking the route to China there was nothing in this charter that would prevent Prince Rupert from claiming China too were they to find it. As to the rights of the Indians—well, they were going to trade with them, weren't they? But since the monopoly covered the selling of things as well as the buying of furs, competition was unlikely and the Company could put its own price on its blankets without fear of underbidding, and its own valuation on the furs without fear of overbidding. Trade is trade.

The nice distinction which the words "not already actually possessed" raises is an important point which may as well be considered. Actual possession intimated colonization. If the English in this instance had a right to encroach upon the French for lack of actual possession, then surely it was to be expected that they would circumvent this very important bit of negligence by at once helping people to settle. That was what the Company promised to do. It promised to explore the whole northern territory and encourage and assist settlement, but while forts and trading posts were strung along the rivers at most strategic points during the next fifteen years, the following two hundred not only saw no settlement to speak of, nor discoveries worth mentioning, but everything art and armor could do to impede colonization was kept in motion. The Frenchmen had been right. The fur resources of the region were inexhaustible. To describe the district as bleak, uninhabitable, harsh, was to help keep the field free from encroachment, and it required only such a half-truth to make the thing effective. Human nature is not very different under a French name from what it is under an English name. Radisson and Groseilliers were as happy as subjects of one king as of another. Charles had tasted salt at Louis's table, Rupert had headed a British army and a French army, and enjoyed a spell of peace in Germany. Why then shouldn't the Indians indulge in similar comforts.

The Indians soon began to crawl northward in their canoes over stretches of country a thousand miles long, laden with furs which the perversity of human nature drove them to exchange for

shoddy blankets. This siphon was soon perplexing the French far below in the interior, for they found their wells of peltries being depleted. Radisson and Groseilliers were gone and no longer needed by the English. The French were becoming desperate. They sent Iberville out to regain the slipping territories, and he stopped at nothing. At one moment in Hudson's Bay, the next in Schenectady, things began to happen thick and fast. Then the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713 gave him time to catch his breath. The military operations entailed a loss to the Hudson's Bay Company of over a million dollars in furs.

Now it seemed a wise thing for the Company to bewail this loss, but it was not so wise as it seemed. Such a sum two hundred years ago was worth twenty times its value to-day, and was enough to make the ordinary trader or merchant green with envy. That so rich a resource should be restricted to the enhancement of a small company of nobles and merchants aroused bitter opposition. It was the same bitterness that was to be visited on the British East India Company and help precipitate the American Revolution. And down to 1720 the Monopoly was effectively exclusive—having weakened the French monopoly and kept the British merchants from the scene.

What the monopoly was worth to the Company may be judged from a few accounts. The ships annually and regularly left London fitted out with simple merchandise and returned with great quantities of furs. As soon as they were sorted they were auctioned off at the company headquarters, "where the annual fair took on the nature of a social function." Arthur Dobbs, who in 1744 published a bitter invective against the Company, gives some notion of the profits in the trade.

- 1 doz. buttons brought one Beaver skin.
- 1 handkerchief ditto.
- 1 gallon of brandy cost the Indians 4 beavers.
- 1 blanket, 6 beavers.
- 1 pair of stockings, 1¼ beaver skins.

Dobbs says that in 1740 they brought back 49,600 beaver skins. Reed, who claims that the king's mistress, Louise Querouaille,

had been in part responsible for the Hudson's Bay Company's charter, declares that in 1676, £650 of merchandise brought £19,000 in furs, or 3,000 per cent. profit; in 1748, £5,000 of merchandise brought £30,000 in furs, or 600 per cent. profit. Fluctuations in the earnings of the fur company "rarely failed to affect the London fur market."

Criticism poured in upon the Company that could not be for ever ignored. To quell the riot of abuse, it undertook to carry out its promise to search for the northwest passage to China. Some further hurried explorations followed between 1719 and 1737. But so long as the Company maintained its power by monopoly and not by open competition, it had few friends and many powerful enemies. One of the most bitter of its enemies was Edward Umphreville, who in 1790 published at London an invective against it under the title "Hudson's Bay." He asserted that the monopoly was a derogation of the best interests of the territory. He claimed that it employed only 315 men in an industry he felt should give sustenance to thousands of unemployed. Umphreville had lived for eleven years in the Bay region, and came away with an antagonism as biased as it was effective. "It has ben en invariable maxim with them for many yrs past," he avowed, "to damp evry laudible endeavor in ther servants, that might tend to mak these countries generally beneficial to the Mother Country. Their conduct will appear very extraordinary to those who are unacquainted with the self-interested views of the Company. They imagine that if it was known to the nation, that the lands they possess were capable of cultivation it might induce individuals to inquire into their right to an exclusive charter; it is therefore their business to represent it in the worst light possible, to discourage an inquiry, which would shake the foundations of their beloved monopoly."

On the other hand, Hunt in his *Merchants Magazine* declared in the early part of the nineteenth century: "What combination of individuals since the creation of the world, ever rendered so much service to science, to their country, and to mankind, as the Hudson's Bay Company? What do we know of 2/3 of an entire

continent that is not derived directly or indirectly from their exertions, their patronage?" But Hunt, the American, loved merchants with more than platonic ardor, the first of a brood of scribes to help convert business into the religion it has since become in America.

For the moment we cannot further consider the doings of the Hudson's Bay Company. The struggle against private enterprise which it undertook will be taken up in a later chapter. So far, the monopoly served a mighty purpose for Great Britain. Upon the anvil of Puritan soundness in economics, and with the hammer of the Hudson's Bay Company monopoly, England crushed for ever all power of the French monopoly in the New World.

In this circumstance we can well understand the significance of the Company's motto: *Pro Pelle Cutem* (Skin for Skin).

CHAPTER XIII

Explorers Exorcise Monopolists

LIFE is a struggle between individuals and monopolies. Society is largely an agglutination of monopolies. Groups seek monopolies on God, on politics, on resources, on literature, on virtues. Individualists sometimes become monopolists, but the conflict between them goes on. For the individualist is the lone seeker, who asks but the right to raze the barrier and penetrate the unknown. He is the explorer wishing but to unravel the mystery of the delitescient, dormant world. For a pittance, he places his findings at the disposal of the monopolist. The monopolist encircles them with his private claims, but the seeker soon describes an area that can no longer be contained—and the seeker triumphs.

Such is the story of the discovery, exploration and settlement of America. A man moves about in a world of forests and fogs. About him hover perennially the forbidding woods. At most his horizon is an ever shiftless circle, an aureole of disappointment. But he keeps a map. Upon a scrap of paper he watches the curve of a river and the prick of a little star, and the convex earth which falls away from his vision becomes more visible than the heavens and as familiar as a pasture. And ever after hordes of human ants and beavers follow in his wake by the magic of that simple tracery. Maps! Maps!

Champlain left a radius of knowledge from Maine to Michigan. La Salle mapped out fabulous schemes for the extension of the fur-trade down to the Mississippi. Louis Joliet, in search of copper mines, left a pageant of experience around Sault St. Marie. Francis Marguere, a scholar, Louis Hennepin, a priest, Charles le Suer, Gabriel Franchere, Maximilian—a parcel of French names wrapt in a bundle of furs and written over with

some of the most important contributions to the geography of North America. Among the English, are three Alexanders—Dalrymple, Mackenzie, Henry, the two Frobishers, Simon Fraser and David Thompson; De Smet, Demers and De Vries for the Dutch; John Ledyard, Lewis and Clark, Fremont, John Colter—a host of Johns for America, sons of her own soil. Alone and almost single-handed these men placed a vast continent before our eyes. "Indeed," says Lawrence J. Burpee, "in studying this period of western discovery, one is struck by the fact that each of the French explorers worked independently, without availing himself of the results of previous explorations, if indeed they had ever come to his knowledge."

There was something Byronic in their characters. Careless of consequences, exploring, negotiating, settling and arousing quarrels, rescuing the captive and spreading the pollen of civilization by a process of cross-fertilization. One of the most picturesque of his kind was Daniel Greysolon, Sieur Duluth. Coming from St. Germain-en-Laye, just out of Paris, he entered the service of the King's Guard and became part of the court life. The internecine struggles in Europe in which he took an active part were not the proper training for the ballroom floor. Duluth turned his attention to America. Sentimentalists would have us believe that these explorers stalked wild-eyed through the woods, their souls bathed in the vast silences. They hold their fingers to their lips (as they write in their studies) and assure us that "the lure of the wilderness life directed his (Duluth's) vagrant fancy." But his records fail to give such an account. There was nothing vagrant about his vision, apart from a certain disillusionment about the world he left behind him. He wanted to make money, and the woods ran rampant with the easiest road to wealth. Everyone declared, according to Duluth, that it was a wilderness impossible to explore, and he was a man of muscle and of action, and he gave the lie to the doubters. He was an explorer, and dissatisfied as he was with the restrictions that made it impossible for him to enjoy the fruits of his labors, he was too much of an explorer to halt because some distant monopolists would cash

in on his daring. But the greed of the monopolist pursued him with accusations.

"I do not believe that such an expedition can give anyone ground to accuse me of having disobeyed the King's order in the year 1676," he protests, "since he merely forbade all his subjects to go into the depths of the woods to trade there with the savages. This I have never done, nor even been willing to take any presents from them, though they have several times thrown them to me, which I have always refused and left, in order that no one might be able to accuse me of having carried on any indirect traffic."

His eyes were on the Vermilion Sea. Monopoly, softly cushioned in France, and rivalry seeking medals from monopoly, spread rumors about his misdeeds. La Salle, impetuous and suspicious, reported that Duluth was heading a trading party. Duluth at once returned to headquarters to disprove the charge.

"I learned that, far from being approved in what I had done, using up my goods and risking my life every day, I was treated as the chief of a party, although I have never had more than eight men with me."

Duluth was establishing friendships with the Indians that for a time at least succeeded in drawing off the furs that were by now being sucked up by the English on Hudson's Bay, and re-directed the drift to the French posts on the Great Lakes and the rivers leading down to Montreal. He was not stalking with his ears cocked for mysteries. But as a man of great energy, he was laboriously giving reality to the four points of the compass. In the midst of these preoccupations, he heard that the Recollet Louis Hennepin had been captured by the very Indians he had just mollified. God evidently loves daring more than prayer, for with only courage and two other Frenchmen, Duluth at once set out to release Hennepin. He traveled for two days and two nights by canoe without stopping. When he overtook the captors, he found them to be 1,100 "souls," but he reprimanded them in no uncertain terms for their insult to the priest. They at once released Hennepin and returned the robes they stole from him,

and spoke of peace. But Duluth returned the two calumets "which they had danced to us," telling the Indians, with pride: "I took no calumets from people who, after having seen me, having received my peace gifts, and having been constantly for a year with Frenchmen, kidnapped them when they were coming to see them." Did Robin Hood present a more picturesque front to a barbarous world?

And all he professed was a desire to see the French flag set by his hand over these regions. This he did on Lake Superior, hardly thinking that that honor would be writ large—DULUTH—upon a whole continent and sharing the privilege of naming an American city with saints, dukes, and cushioned kings.

Invariably, the individual mutinous explorer's impulses ran counter to the concrete, circumscribed interests of the monopolies. No trait could have found more disfavor in the monopolist's eyes than the explorer's tendencies to shout his findings before the world. Knowledge of the regions was destructive of their commercial security, and though they obtained their privileges by promising to explore and settle, technically they did neither. It was well for a man to explore, but not to go too far off the profitable path. Risks were all right if fairly safe, but men with knowledge of the region were not easily replaced in the wilderness, and to spread that knowledge was simply to bring rivals to the scene.

As Ellsworth Huntington has shown in his "Character of Races," man's geographic surroundings are his best influences. The selective processes these entail in weeding out through migration and immigration, the strains and strata of social life that cannot meet the demands of barbarism and wilderness, are his finest determinants. In the struggle with the wilderness, the contest between the strong, intelligent and enterprising explorers and geographers, and the conservative civilized forces represented by the monopolies, was one of the most important this country had to face. Had it not been for these men who broke away, inch by inch, from the restrictive swaddling clothes of the companies, the life in the country to-day would be considerably different. In a measure their objection to settlers was their own undoing, even as it was

responsible for scientific foraging. The settler at once digs himself in, puts up his church and begins to teach his children the little knowledge he has brought with him. But the explorer has no family, no roots, no traditions to maintain, and becomes a perpetual hyphen between the past and the future, the known and the unknown. He brings back new experiences, stirs up new reflections out of a lonely winter in the wilderness; he acquires few "habits"—those static limitations which comfort misnames good.

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Duluth had founded in 1678 a trading post in Minnesota now bearing his name. He was still an active man when in 1685 there was born at Three Rivers a boy later known as *Sieur de la Verendreye*. Verendreye's mother was a daughter of the Governor of the place, and his father was within three years of the birth of the boy to become the Governor himself. There followed for the child fifty-seven years of ceaseless activity that included frontier warfare and soldiering in Flanders, marriage at Three Rivers (Canada), trading and trapping in the manner of most men of the wilderness. In those years, four sons were born to Verendreye, and grew up inured to the same arduous yet simple life. The father moved, not as a lone trader, but as the great patriarchs of old moved, with his sons as lieutenants and forty or fifty *voyageurs* with him. There lacks only the flocks and the herds to make it seem like a tale from the Bible.

Three score years only toughened the fibers of the man. His boys were his pride. Whenever he reported conversations with the Indians he always said they called him "My father," and he had a paternal regard for their welfare, admonishing them "to hunt well in order to supply the wants of their families" or "to keep quiet for the present, to take good care of their lands, so that the French, who came from so long a distance to supply their wants, should always find the road open." But he never forgot to add that they must "satisfy the traders."

And according to him the Chiefs would make answer: "I thank thee, my father, for having had pity on us."

On the death of his son, Verendreye says that the Chief as-

sured him that "he did not cease to weep for my son and all the French men; that the lake was still red with their (blood) which called for vengeance."

The Indians urged him to remain with them, but he felt, as he assures the Governor, that he ought to move on, discover more regions, and "increase the number of your children," by alliance and trade. Taking two of his sons along and leaving one behind as commandant, he would press on across the prairies. At one time, though eager to move, he slowed up his progress in order that Mr. la Marque would have time to catch up with him so that together they might try to discover the Mandan Indians. When he has discovered them, he notes their tribal names and ends his reports with the biblical phrase—"these are the names of the nation." Thus on and on he goes, adding "to the number of your children" league after league, from mountain to mountain, from the Mandans to the Assiniboines, in search of the Western Sea. The Mandans insist upon carrying the old patriarch at times. An Assiniboine Indian insists upon carrying his bags and absconds with his papers, documents and presents. For the sake of peace and friendship with the tribe he does not use force to recover his property. On, on, on—in search of the white people he had heard of, in search of a distant land where "the other side of the river cannot be seen; the water is salt; it is a country of mountains." On, until at last "I discovered these days a river flowing to the west. All the lakes and rivers of which I have had any knowledge go to Hudson's Bay, the Northern Sea, except the Mandan River." And then he had his reward. In 1743, Verendreye, nearly sixty years old, was the first white man to see at a great distance the snow-clad peaks of the Rocky Mountains. From the Red River of the North, far on to the present state of Montana, his feet have marked the soil, and another wide world of wilderness has been placed upon our wall. Maps. Verendreye died in his sixty-fourth year—proud of the fact that while he had made others rich he had himself laid up treasures in history only.

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There was no rest for these men in the north. Year by year these trappers, explorers and geographers were mapping, map-

ping, mapping more of the distant lands. Fifteen years after the death of Verendreye another little boy was born, back in England. When he was only seven years old his father died, but he contrived somehow to study a bit of mathematics at Grey Coat School at Westminster. This schooling ended when he was about fourteen. In order to give him an "opportunity" the Hudson's Bay Company applied to the school for some apprentices who knew something of navigation, and David Thompson was one of only two boys who could fill the bill. For this opportunity they charged somebody \$25, and sent this tender lad out into the wilderness of Canada for a term of seven years.

Verendreye's lifetime of service for France was now Britain's profit. Little matter. Most of the lifetime labor of this boy, David Thompson, was to be turned to the advantage of the republic he disliked to the day of his death. That's only history.

However, his first two years in America were spent at the factories of the Company, and thenceforth his winters found him in the interior. There, while idling, he would put his simple knowledge of mathematics to use. He was puzzled as to where he really was on this terraqueous globe. Without instruments, with but a smattering of understanding of surveying, without a decent, reliable map of the world, just by dabbling, he figured where, in all that unplumbed wilderness of space, the company's trading post was. And with that point as the center, in the true and simple manner of the scientist, he laid out three thousand five hundred miles of territory which had not hitherto had an arc or a meridian that it could call its own. It took him thirteen years to do this, but most of that time was spent in behalf of the genial gentlemen of the Hudson's Bay Company who loved their furs so much that they gave young Thompson little assistance and less encouragement to keep up his favorite pastime.

Of this remarkable piece of geography, Thompson's biographer, Mr. J. B. Tyrrell, has this to say: "When one considers the nautical almanacs there were available at that time, this result is quite astonishing and puts to shame much even of the good observing of the present day. At that time there were very few other points in this whole continent of America whose positions

on the earth's surface were as accurately known as this remote trading post on the Saskatchewan. On the maps of Canada its position has been changed many times but the latest surveys have brought it back to the place to which it was assigned by this young astronomer one hundred and thirty-five years ago." Mr. Tyrrell, himself a mining engineer, thinks Thompson was the greatest land geographer who ever lived.

How Thompson's geography was to threaten the security of the monopoly in furs we shall presently see, though he was by no means alone in this great earth-writing.

To the life in the wilderness Thompson was like an oak in the storm. He was loyal to the Company even in his bitterest reflections. But when they sought to restrict his innocent preoccupation with surveying and astronomy, he balked and unhorsed his employers. For fourteen years he had labored in their behalf. When his second term of seven years' service came to an end, Thompson was ordered by the Hudson's Bay Company to refrain from further charting their territory. Evidently they were not too well pleased with the exactitude of his records and the certitude of his measurements which might easily become a great weapon in his hands. Thompson answered the order by his resignation. This was a particularly foolish step on their part, for at that time there was growing up a powerful competitor in the fur trade, as we shall see in the next chapter. But meanwhile, and entirely on his own responsibility, Thompson had explored the region round Lake Athabaska. The chill reception this remarkable achievement was given by the head of the Hudson's Bay Company's post, Colen, made him cast in his lot with the Northwest Company.

Among the men of this new fur company, Thompson found himself much more in his element, with Mackenzie and Fraser to emulate, and a wider spirit and interest in exploration and science for its own sake. "How very different the liberal and public spirit of this North West Company of Merchants of Canada," wrote Thompson, "from the mean, selfish policy of the Hudson's Bay Company styled Honourable." The rulers of this company were themselves on the scene, not merely distant moneymakers

unacquainted with the country. Thompson felt himself here a surveyor and astronomer, not merely a catcher of muskrats. The Indians had already given him the name Koo-Koo-Sint, or The Man who looks at the Stars.

In the coming years, Thompson fixed the source of the Mississippi River, laid up a great store of geographical facts in many notebooks, and mapped the regions over which the fur interests were to come to blows. The terra incognita by which the company profited and which, so far as the world went, it preferred to keep unknown, was slowly being won to civilization by men with a bent for exploration. When reverses in the fur trade forced Thompson to abandon his map making for a time, he drooped, and "with a heavy heart he turned his back on the far west, and entered the cold and dismal forests which he knew only to loathe." The moment the opportunity came again for undertaking his favorite task through the amalgamation of some companies, Thompson set out again, this time to finish a task that was to give him a permanent place in the exploration of America.

The ramifications of the trappers and explorers, between whom the true distinction is often very hard to make, had led the various fur interests far across the country. They were beginning now to contest, not merely for certain districts, but for the entire continent. Mackenzie, Fraser, and others had opened passes through to the far north. Captain Cook had come round the Pacific and had revealed the possibilities in the fur trade between Oregon and China. But how to get across the Rockies was unknown. Upon this project all the fur companies were now bending their energies. The struggle was narrowing down, and they who could first capture the important routes would remain triumphant.

The Company of Explorers of the Missouri was organized in 1793 for the purpose of engaging in the fur business and making discoveries as far as the Pacific. They sought educated men for their expeditions, "to enlighten the age" as one of them put it. The record of one of these, James Mackay, who had become a Spanish subject, is said to have fallen into the hands of Jefferson, who used it in formulating his instructions to Meriwether Lewis.

"Written by an inconspicuous fur-trader," says F. J. Teggart, "in the wilderness, in the depth of a Nebraskan winter, it is worthy of comparison, as well in thought as in expression, with the finished product of President Jefferson." From all directions, geographical knowledge was being extended, laying bare the forests and leaving tracteries on the sands of the deserts of Utah and Nevada to California. The monopolies did all in their power to retain this knowledge to their own private purposes. Even the naturalist, Audubon, found himself frustrated and deceived by their agents, who told him "such untruths as at once disgust and shock you," as he puts it. "All this through fear that strangers should attempt to settle here, and divide with them the profits which they enjoy."

But geographic knowledge had got beyond confinement, and it was necessary to pursue it with greater knowledge still. In this few were better equipped than David Thompson. Rivalries were concentrating their forces, ready to make their one last drive to grasp the main highways of the fur trade. From the north, from the east, from the south—all interests were converging upon the Pacific. John Jacob Astor, at New York, was formulating his magnificent project for the establishment of a vast Emporium on the coast of Oregon, where he hoped to gather the furs from the whole northwest for transshipment to China. The American government was sympathetic to his plans. With some such thoughts in mind, Jefferson had a few years before sent Messrs. Lewis and Clark to search out a route to the Pacific. The Northwest Company were determined to prevent Astor from being the first to found a settlement on that shore and thus give the Republic claim to its possession. In all haste they dispatched David Thompson to establish a fort before Astor's ship could round the Horn and reach the forbidden bar at the mouth of the Columbia. For Thompson it was one mad dash for the sea. In the midst of winter he crossed the divide, weathered the mountain snows, and fairly leapt down the impetuous waters of the Columbia, traversing territory never before seen by white man. Brilliant and

courageous as his trek, he arrived too late. Astor's men were there ahead of him.

From 1812 to 1857, Thompson lived a comparatively inactive life in Montreal, devoting his efforts to trying to get his map of the northwest and his journals published. Trained in the school of the monopolists, he centered his interests in an attempt to narrow down the claims of the United States to the northwest territory. He did not seem to realize that his own explorations had done more than all else to undermine the claims of monopoly. Fifty thousand miles of American soil were better known for the footsteps of David Thompson. He died destitute. But the companies had checkmated one another.

As Frederic Paxson has so aptly put it, "Every trapper who came back after a season's hunt in the Montana valleys had new observations to refute the common idea that here was an uninhabitable desert. If these hunters had been more literate, they would have weakened the idea more promptly. They knew the whole interior of the continent decades before it was surveyed or portrayed on any chart, but their hard-won observations were rarely reduced to maps and writing, and lesser men who later made the maps took most of the credit."

These lesser men ranged from "illiterate, ill-bred, fault-finding" men such as Simon Fraser, "of jealous disposition," to such others as were "ambitious and energetic, with considerable conscience, and in the main holding to honest convictions." Foremost among the simple, far-seeing, conscientious trapper-explorers was certainly David Thompson.

CHAPTER XIV

Democracy Puts in a Word of Its Own

LIFE is a carnival of paradoxes, and history, a demonstration of the law of opposites. "Out of clay, pots are fashioned," said the sage Lao Tsze, "but in the space within them consists their value." Failure is the reward of achievement, success is the negation of doing. The little resistances of each small piece of wood to the other in a chair holds the man in comfort on it; but that is the burden of the chair. Good and evil comfort each other as man zig-zags his way through eternity.

The bureaucracy which sought to have and guard at the same time, prevented France from building her empire in America. Frustrated by monopoly and restriction, the few Frenchmen in the new world tried by rapid sweeping over the continent to encircle their domains, and they lost all to England. Britain on the other hand, by giving the colonists more freedom to harden themselves into small communities, built up the very resistances that now bear the burden of American democracy. There is no escape. You cannot be the vase and the water, the empire and the empire builder all in one.

The Hudson's Bay Company lay like the apple of fable in the throat of France in America; the colonies of England were the cancer in her stomach. The vast hinterland, the unplumbed interior of the continent of North America could not in these circumstances help but give up the ghost of empire.

Yet, had England in 1763 been able to see what would happen in 1783 she might have pursued the French in Canada with less enmity. The two decades during which Great Britain remained in full possession of the northeastern quarter of the continent caused her more concern than the thing was worth. Had France been permitted to pursue her course westward across Canada, both

France and England might still be in America to-day, with England where the United States is now. Had there been no Hudson's Bay Company burrowing down from the north, the New England and Virginia settlers would have more likely turned due westward. True they would have bumped up against France and Spain anyway, but had England been content to develop the small parcel of the continent to its fullest possibilities first, her grasp would not have contained the unwieldy, and there would not have been such a wide area of unpreëmpted lands for her restless settlers to spill over into. The more land that became British, the larger the pasture for her flocks, the more certain became the reversion to the freedom which was certain to undermine her empire. "There were," says Clarence Walworth Alvord, "the fur traders who opposed western colonization; and these latter were supported by British and American speculators in eastern lands who feared the effect of opening the West." Their fears were wiser than the hopes of Pitt in Parliament.

The English had no sooner got Canada after the Treaty of Paris in 1763 than they began to realize that they would have to take the rest of French territory just to hold their own. They had not got Louisiana, nor had they got the Indians who saw themselves as next in the line for subjugation. Treat them kindly and honestly if possible, but "reduce them to Peace by Force" if necessary became the policy. Sir Guy Carleton, Governor of Canada, wrote to Sir William Johnson, pointing out that if this is not accomplished, "This Province be nearly ruined, Great Britain be a considerable Loser, and France the sole Gainer, as they must turn the greatest part of the Furrs down the Mississippi, instead of the St. Lawrence."

The Governor of Canada saw the rivalry among the subjects of the King of England for the furs and lands of America disrupting the empire. Little did it avail him to point out that if Britain was ever to contain the possessions of France and Spain, it would require a hardness of unity in her people able to resist them. Two years after the treaty, both French and Spanish from the Mississippi were within fifty miles of Detroit, drawing off the

furs which should have cleared the Indians of debt to the British. Yet, with intruders so close at hand, the fur interests centered their hostility upon a company which had secured the right to mine copper on Lake Superior from the Government on the suspicion that it was really there to trade in furs.

There was in this fur trade a veritable demoniacal power of mutation. Everything seemed to split off from everything else under its influence. From the moment France was conquered in America, the Hudson's Bay Company began to lose control over the trade. French traders had scattered throughout the interior. The struggle between the Jesuits and the French governors of Canada was intensified when the British came into power. Laws against illicit trading, trifled with under the French, were ignored or openly violated under the English. Revoked and restored, revoked and restored until the fall of Quebec, they were reënacted only to be again ignored under the British. It was hopeless. No organization that "did nothing but sit on the sea and wait for furs" as did the Hudson's Bay Company, could hope for ultimate control.

In the westward direction, however, things were going more steadily and more securely. Across Pennsylvania, across Virginia, cutting through Kentucky and Georgia, straight as an arrow into the backbone of Spanish and French territory along the Mississippi, the Germans, the Swedes, and the English were pressing. Long before Daniel Boone was born, trappers were invading the regions this side of the Cumberland Gap, negotiating with and intimidating the Indians. While the fur trade was not as romantic a movement in the south as in the north, it was none the less effective. Captain John Smith, a hundred years before, had seen the possibilities; nor had sight of them been lost in that century after. The English had established a trade with the Creeks at Charleston and with the Cherokees.

To understand the development of the fur trade in the United States it is necessary to go back to the beginning of the century preceding the Revolution. When in 1714 the French under Bienville built Fort Toulouse on the Alabama River as a fur depot

and as a diplomatic point from which to control the Indians, the British in the Carolinas which then included much of Georgia became alert with apprehension of the danger to their southern colonies, similarly exploiting the fur trade.

Roaming about the forests in these regions was one young gentleman by the name of Chicken. In 1715 he won a victory over the Indians that made him famous. By 1721 he was a Colonel and a member of the Board of Indian Commissioners and kept a journal. And the journal has but one item of importance above all others—furs. The grammar may be a bit quaint, but its import is clear. Reports Chicken “that there was four White Men in the Chickesaw Nation and that they had sold all their goods, but three of them was gone down with 20 horse load of Skins and the other Stays to take care of what Skins is left behind and that they all Promised to be up again about this time.”

Colonel Chicken’s diplomacy was two edged—it impressed the Indians and the English, or at least it sought to. The King of the Upper People made the following “Talk” to Colonel Chicken, and the Colonel is nothing loath to record it verbatim:—“That they are all very glad the English have taken so much Notice of them in sending one of their beloved Men among them, that they have gathered a few Skines which they desired I would accept of to do with them as I pleased.”

In the course of the Talk Exchange, Chicken asks about a Mr. Sharp, an Indian trader, who had come down one night to the village and had carried off some skins; he asks for information about a Sawney Longe who went over to the French; he speaks against their running into debt; he declares that henceforth the English expect the Indians to dress the skins and bring them to their depots, for “You very well know that Our goods are always dressed to your hands.”

To which the King of the Upper People made answer that Sharp had only collected what skins were owing to him, that they would not say anything against Longe, and “As to Trust and raw Skines they made Answer that it was intirely the White Mans fault and that some of them followed the Indians in the woods

for their Skines and that they love them so well that they do not care if they take them raw or any other ways." However, the Upper People have already developed a strong inferiority complex and admit that they must adopt the Englishman's form of trade as "otherwise they never will be a People."

Thus Chicken: Our "Robin Hood" goes about the woods, slashing right and left, revoking licences, issuing orders that must be obeyed "as they will answer the Contrary at their Peril," striving with all his might to counteract the French influence among the Indians.

His successor, Captain Tobias Fitch, took up the cudgel in 1725. Not quite so ready to accept "presents" of skins from the natives, not quite so conscious of being "one of their beloved Men" to the English. "My King" figures more prominently in his technique. The Mr. Sharp whom Chicken was spying on has been robbed by the Indians, and Mr. Fitch is come to seek retribution. He tells the Chief that if Mr. Sharp had died at the hands of his robbers, the English would have demanded the death, not of the murderers alone, but of the Chief as well. The Chief admits that he received some of the stolen goods, offers to repay the damage, and promises "That I never will be guilty of the Like Action While I live." Nice Chief! But the Promise is not kept, the white woman that was captured by the Indians is not returned, and Captain Fitch has to go down again to do some talking. He talks in the name of his king, and when he does so one feels that "my King" is somewhere there in the forest near by, not six weeks' journey overseas. He obtains 120 skins in partial payment and a further promise of either Slaves or Skins—"This you may Tell your king he may depend on." Nice King!

But kings are kings, and the French and the Spanish are entrenching themselves among the Indians also. Fifteen years later they threaten South Carolina, and some buffer colony must be established. James Edward Oglethorpe, distinguished for his achievements against the Turks, ought to be efficient in handling Indians. At any rate, a philanthropist and protagonist of the poor debtors in London prisons, and a devout Protestant, he secured

a charter from the king for a colonial domain, and with a following of "German Lutherans (Salzburgers), Piedmontese, Scottish Highlanders, Swiss, Portuguese Jews and Englishmen" he set out in 1732 to found a state. This was the last, and perhaps the most idealistic, attempt of England to establish colonies in North America, and it was supported solely for the sake of blocking the path of France and Spain in the South.

Immediately after the conquest of Quebec, in 1763, the French monopolists scattered their camps like the Roman castra throughout the interior. The very next year Pierre Laclède Liguist established a post at St. Louis, which to this day is one of the most important fur centers in all America. It lay on the east bank of the river and soon comprised a village of log-cabins with a few hundred inhabitants who bartered with the Indians throughout the Missouri River Country,—a conglomerate mass of happy-go-lucky hunters, trappers, and boatmen drawn from every race in Europe. Here the glassy, sucking whirlpools of fur-trade competition threatened England, France and Spain with a like doom. As early as 1544, Spain had tried to drain off the furs into Mexico, but not till the French and English had shown that the center of their ambitions lay in the Mississippi region did the Spaniards open their eyes to realities. As soon as Spain received Louisiana from Louis XV in 1763, she assumed the same attitude as France—the territory became a channel for the fur traffic northward. The French moved St. Louis across the river, and things went on as they did before.

Such were the counter-currents in the commercial life of the new world, prior to the Revolution. Behind these imperialistic strivings was the hunter and the trapper. As he followed the savage and the fur-bearer back into the wilderness, the farmer arrived to take possession of the land, making the return of savage and beast impossible. The fur-trader, seeking good-fellowship with the Indian, with whom he lived on a basis of equality, was at variance with the interests of the settler and his laborers. "The fur trader depended on peace and mutual confidence between the whites and the numerous Indian tribes," says William Schaper,

"while slave catching implied a chronic state of warfare. The frontiersman complained at one time that Governor Moore and a coterie of friends were seeking to monopolize the fur-trade and the slave-catching business for their own private gain." When the government took over the monopoly of the fur trade, as we have seen in Colonel Chicken's time, adjustment was sought between these antagonistic tendencies. But settlement only drove the trapper deeper and deeper into the wilderness, increased the cost of transportation of both goods and pelts, and increased irritation.) To standardize the process of exchange, caravans moved backward and forward through the wilderness with regularity, beating the paths for the transportation systems to be installed in the following century. (The further these white men got from civilization, the freer they became, and as time wore on, they found more and more competition from newer organizations and combinations of anarchic cliques. The enmities of the monopolists who wished to exclude and include, to be vase and water at the same time, brought about their own disintegration. And the part the fur trade played in the Revolution is indicated by examples of which but two or three will suffice.

Among the staunch royalists in Canada was one who termed himself a Seignieur, the Scotchman, Colonel John Nairne, who reigned at Murray Bay on the St. Lawrence. He had fought to win Canada to Great Britain as he had fought to crush the Revolution. But when independence came, he consoled himself by proving that it would not be injurious to England. He was delighted with the fact that before 1800 the United States was but a small part of the continent, "bounded on all sides and will be filled up with people in no very great number of years. Our share of North America is yet unknown in its extent. Enterprising people in quest of furs travel for years towards the north and towards the west through vast countries of good soil . . . destined to be filled with people in some future time."

Within the United States, another royalist, Phineas Bond, the first British Consul, wrote to the Duke of Leeds in 1789 pointing out that the Act of Parliament of 1732 which had restrained

the export of hats from British America had injured that industry. At that time, he said, there had been a plentiful and easy supply of furs from the northern and western country which the colonists could have turned into "the finer sort of hats." But now that the Republic was free to make what it liked he showed that the lack of furs was crippling the enterprise and the States were still forced to go to England for low-priced hats. He therefore argued against throwing open the fur regions as "a free communication with that part of the country, which is now comprehended within the Northern posts occupied by his Majesty's troops, would facilitate the means of procuring large supplies of furs; the manufacture of hats in America would instantly be extended so as to become a profitable article of export, and moreover an essential part of the fur trade would be thereby diverted out of its present channel and center in the American markets."

From Parliament came the echoes of this fear, where Lord Shelburne was chided for clothing the Americans "in the warm coverings of our fur trade." The merchants opposed to the monopoly scoffed at the patriotism of some of these elder statesmen. "Congenial," as it may have seemed to one writer, "to find old gentlemen deeply interested in furs," enlightened England began to look distastefully upon the motto "Skin for Skin." At length, Horace Walpole, speaking of the claims of the agents of the fur companies, tittered: "History never can describe it and keep its countenance."

For thirteen years England clung to her posts in what was then called the Northwest because "the longer the evacuation was delayed, the more time would be given the traders to remove their merchandise or to convert it into furs." While the Americans grumbled at their losses, the Canadians stormed against the "lavish unnecessary concession, which induced the negotiators of the treaty with America to lay at her feet the most valuable branch of trade in this country."

The scramble for furs increased, ruthless destruction of wild life followed, bringing in a million dollars worth of furs in 1785 alone, some coming from territory now belonging to the

United States. American statesmen, like Adams, began to see that with the trade in hand, the Republic could pay off its debts to England and supply France with skins for necessary merchandise. Monopoly was doomed. A veritable host of competing companies now entered the field from all directions, and a mad rush across the continent carried Indian, fur-bearer and trapper before and behind.

CHAPTER XV

The Fur Trade Girdles the World

THE monopolies that sought to keep the wilderness within their grasp had begun to fall to pieces before the American Revolution. The gods were busy making men mad. The Canadians chafed under the irritating limitations of the companies, and by 1774, obtained some form of civil government for themselves at Quebec. Montreal had become the heart of the traffic and the rendezvous of black-cowled priests, brightly arrayed soldiers, barbarians in all their native splendor, and semi-barbarous trappers with their devil-may-care manners and their angel-may-care voices. At Montreal all the news of any importance went the rounds, and all the schemes for new exploitations were there concocted. It was the clearing house for all projected developments, and the unlighted pit from which the tragedies that were enacted in the wilderness were rehearsed and directed.

Here at Montreal in 1779 (while the clamor of revolution dinned round New York) a number of traders, no longer able to submit to the surveillance of the Hudson's Bay Company, got together and formed a company of their own. The Michilimackinac Company, it called itself, but as merchant after merchant threw in his lot with them, they took on more portentous proportions and became known as the Northwest Company. The year after the Revolution this company became a very serious matter to the Hudson's Bay Company.

The Northwest Company had commenced operations beyond the territorial limits granted by charter to the Hudson's Bay Company, but inasmuch as trapping was naturally receding across the continent this meant that the new company was shutting the old within furless regions. Furthermore, the new company was

largely recruited from the dissatisfied factors of the old, with long experience and intimate wisdom in the handling of the Indians. Through years of arduous voyageuring for the French and the English, these burly Scotsmen had become inured to hardship. The territory from Great Slave Lake to New Orleans had been the storm center of their cyclonic activities for forty years. And now, released from the Hudson's Bay Company, they plunged into the far western world with no thought but their own chaotic impulses and no pride but in their own brute strength. It became entirely a matter of who can get *there* first: the continent was his who first pasted an inscription on the great divide, whether written in Indian paint, on paper, or with lead.

There had always been more or less clandestine trading, but now they pooled their resources openly, for war without quarter. Their snow-shoes and their sleds, their fleet canoes, invaded ever more distant territories, bludgeoning their way through preëmption and prohibition. The Mississippi, the Missouri, the Columbia, one by one fell to their claim of priority. And now the Spanish from the south and the United States came to challenge their sway. The continent was growing smaller and smaller. They hated its loneliness, they dreaded its mosquitoes more than its grizzly bears, they despised themselves for the weaknesses that brought them to this comfortless life, they dreamed of better things left behind—and the futility of it all broke out in them as bravado and hauteur. If trade they must, then they would trade at all costs, and conquer.

In the years between 1784 and 1821, the Northwest Company's rangers had reached the Pacific by way of two hitherto unexplored rivers—the Mackenzie and the Columbia—and its forts dominated some of the most strategic points in western Canada. While the depredations of its factors left scenes of fratricide and carnage in their wake, the machinations of its chief factotums who reigned over its destinies resembled the doings at the courts of Arthurian kings. Sir Alexander Mackenzie, the Honorable William McGillivray, and their successors, held court over a tribe of



Astoria in 1813. From Franchere's Narrative

Highlanders, Frenchmen and unregenerate forest rangers, audacious, picturesque and raucous. Eighteen-foot walls or stockades surrounded their castles, which, likewise built of logs, towered like skyscrapers from within. Sumptuous apartments and gargantuan halls bedecked with trophies of the chase and portraits of the white chiefs in scarlet and ruffles, comprised the interior. And within resounded the hilarious shrieks of bacchants and bacchante which sometimes assumed great solemnity and sometimes rose to the status of furious rows. Nothing was wanting to permit anyone to forget that LAW here reigned with grim reality; democracy was not cradled in sentiments of freedom and equality; prestige and power were not symbolized and civilized by crown and scepter. Such symbols were not for the wilderness mind to contemplate.

Before long the struggle between the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company became a matter almost of shoot at sight. The explorer, Captain Franklin, could not get the representatives of the two companies to join him in a simple discussion about his routes and precautions, until he had built a little hut equi-distant from either post. The Bible and booze only made matters worse, and hunger, breach of promise, and violent restraint, like fire-breathing dragons, invested the wilderness, wherever the companies crossed each other's paths.

Into this dual rulership over the fur traffic now came the Spaniards and the Americans—a new force, home bred and home brewed, and responsible to no interests not native to the land.

When Baron de Corondelet of Spain turned to the settlement of the Mississippi region and the exploitation of its furs in 1794, he sub-let his privileges not to another Spaniard, but to "a young and robust Irishman" named Andrew Todd. Todd soon became better known as Don Andreas, and his vast stores of furs aroused general envy. But few lived long in that life, and Don Andreas was succeeded by another Irishman—Carlos Howard. There was as yet no outstanding Spaniard, gifted with the insight, foresight and hindsight the life of the trapper required. Then came

Manuel Lisa and Spain found, too late, her point of contact with the receding new world.

Lisa's father was a government agent in the Louisiana territory. At twenty-eight Lisa held the monopoly of the trade with the Osage Indians. At thirty-five he had \$1,600 in capital, and with it fitted himself out an expedition with forty-two men up the Missouri River. Lewis and Clark had just returned from their expedition through St. Louis, and Lisa rushed into the region, built himself a fort at the mouth of the Big Horn River, and commenced reconnoitering for furs in all directions. Within two years he had three hundred and fifty men working under him, half French-Canadians and half Americans, with thirteen barges and keel boats plying the Missouri River. But for the enmity of the Blackfeet Indians of North Dakota they would have reached Montreal. His energy was boundless. In twelve years, to the time of his death, he made twelve trips up the Missouri, covering twenty-six thousand miles. Army officers and scientists always found a welcome at his post, which had little of the atmosphere of the usual trading post, and dinner parties in the manner of the Latin, with coffee and dessert, clarified his fame among banqueteers. The goodfellowship and indefatigable enterprise earned for him as much as \$35,000 in profits in a single year.

When pressed for an explanation of his success, Lisa replied in a manner since become the type of the American business man. "I put into my operations great activity," he said. "I go a great distance while some are considering whether they will start today or tomorrow. I impose upon myself great privations. Ten months of the year I am buried in the depths of the forest, at a vast distance from my own house. I appear as the benefactor, not the pillager, of the Indian. I carried among them the seed of the large pumpkin from which I have seen in their possession fruit weighing 160 pounds; also the large bean, the potato, the turnip; and these vegetables will make a comfortable part of their subsistence; and this year I promised to carry the plow. Besides, my blacksmiths work incessantly for them, charging nothing. I

lend them traps, only demanding a preference in their trade. My establishments are the refuge of the weak, and of the old men no longer able to follow their lodges; and by these means I have acquired the confidence and friendship of the natives and the consequent choice of their trade."

Varied and far-flung as were his enterprises, he still had time to marry three women,—two white, and one red—Mitain, the daughter of an Omaha chief. Though she yielded later to the precedence of Lisa's second wife, the aunt of the Governor of Iowa, Mitain clung to him with primitive faithfulness. In time, Lisa determined that his little daughter by Mitain should be educated in St. Louis and reared as a white woman. This meant permanent separation from the mother, but she yielded, accepting the reflection on her race and the hope of betterment for her daughter with savage nobility.

But for Lisa it was a bargain, not a command. In all things, he traded fair. Before long he was head of the Missouri Fur Company, and with him was one of the most spectacular and legendary of the tribe of trappers in American History—John Colter. Rummaging about in every nook and cranny of the country till by accident he came across the Yellowstone, Colter was as sharp with the Indians as Lisa was shrewd and tireless. Lisa's company was now acquainted with the land on to the Rocky Mountains, and his men dragged their supplies by rope up the rivers after the manner of the Volga boatmen, singing ribald songs—or carried them over portages.

Success tumbled into the lap of Lisa, until ill-luck made him stumble over the Blackfeet Indians and fall afoul of the Hudson's Bay Company. The Blackfeet country was the best beaver country at that time in America, but there was no depredation which these Indians were not ready and willing to perpetrate on the Missouri Company. While he was among the Arikara Indians in Montana he learned that they had set fire to one of his posts, destroying \$15,000 worth of furs. The hand of the rival companies was making itself felt, a rivalry which by 1812 and from then on

was to involve Astor's Rocky Mountain Fur Company, Hudson's Bay Company, Northwest Company and the Missouri Company. The center of gravity had shifted to St. Louis.

§

There is nothing unrelated in life. Things happen, but not by auto-gestation. An event that takes form in one century assumes significance in another. Only time and history reveal the unity of incident that makes up the story of man.

The Vikings who had been the first to wear the skins of American beasts, had, as will be remembered, also pushed on into the Dvina and down the Steppes of Russia, and like the creatures in "Chicken Little" had picked up one by one the numerous tribes of Slav-land as they pressed on across Siberia. That slow, glacial movement of men took centuries in crossing Asia. By the middle of the sixteenth century, Moscow was exacting tribute of a thousand sables a year from the Tartars. By the end of that century, bands of hunters and adventurers, supported by Moscow were establishing forts along the rivers of Siberia just as the French and English were doing in America. They reached the Pacific long before the French and English had half crossed North America. But the Chinese put a stop to Russian migration for another century.

Then there entered the service of Peter the Great of Russia a Danish navigator of the name of Vitus Bering. In 1725 he crossed Siberia, built himself a ship at Kamchatka, and commenced a series of explorations that in 1740 reached Alaska and gave Russia a claim to territory in North America. It cost Bering his life the next year, and another forty years went by before anyone else ventured into these waters. This time it was the English Captain James Cook. In three successive voyages, Cook placed Australasia, Polynesia, and the northwest coast of America on the map, and revealed the startling news that furs, which could be had for a song from the Amerinds, could be sold for an opera in China. The fur-trade had now encircled the globe.

Strange is the fate of men. Like white caps on the sea, they toss for a moment on the crest of fame and melt away into blue.

Along with Captain Cook there had been a young American whose adventurous temperament had brought him to the Captain's notice. He made several very important bits of exploration for Cook. He saw the effect of a few furs on the Chinese, and conceived the idea of beginning a regular trade between the Americans, the Indians and the Chinese. Nowhere in all the Republic, however, could he get anyone to back him. Robert Morris was willing, but failed to carry his plan through. Jefferson believed in him, introduced him to the notables of Europe, and did all he could to further the traveler's passion for being the first to come across the continent from Oregon to Virginia, and finally obtained a passport for him from Catherine of Russia so that he might first cross Asia to Alaska thence undertake his lone journey.

This man, John Ledyard, spent one long bitter winter sledging his way over the wastes of snow, across twenty-five large navigable rivers between Moscow and Irkutsk. At last he reached Yakutsk. There, instead of furthering his movements, the Russian governor subjected him to an enforced hospitality, frustrated his every attempt to move on till he had obtained a revocation of the passport from the Empress and rushed Ledyard back in flying haste across Siberia, and dumped him, penniless on the Polish border.

Ledyard had run up against the Russian American Fur Company which suspected his purpose. The very year that Ledyard died in Africa—1788—his dreams of America hovering over him like a sweet promise—everybody in the world seemed determined to cash in on them. Merchants from Boston sent vessels to the northwest coast; English ships rushed thither; and the Russian American Fur Company commenced operations on a grand scale in Alaska. And the trade drew to its support in Russia another "White Cap" to rise with illustrious promise for one brief moment and fall away into blue.

The year Ledyard died, Nicolai Petrovich de Rezanov met the head of the Russian American Company and at once exerted his influence with Catherine, whose administrator he was, and the company was granted a monopoly of the fur trade in America. Rezanov had had enough of civilization and its glamorous titles,

of which he had received more than his share, and saw in the labors in the new world a chance to erect a new state a little closer to realities. Before the end of the century he was the leading genius of the Company and nurtured plans for the settlement of northwest America, with schools, libraries, and industries that would have greatly altered the history of the continent had he succeeded.

But the first flare of success and vast increment which stocked the wardrobes of Russian royalty with the costliest of furs, left the little colony in distant America not quite so secure. Rezanov had brought within his powers the entire region from Alaska to Kamchatka, but starvation overtook them, and in all that wilderness there was none but the Spaniards in California who could save them. Rezanov set off in a little vessel to plead for food. The Spaniards were however prevented by law from giving him any assistance. His rank, distinction and personal charm kept him in the swing of entertainments among the pleasure-loving Spaniards, but trade with him they feigned to be impossible. However, diplomacy was not new to him, nor the more delicate arts of love. With the promise of a treaty with Spain and the hand of the Governor's daughter, Rezanov, now forty-two years old, sailed for Sitka with a cargo of food-stuffs for his stricken people. He then set off at once for Russia via Siberia to secure the ratification of his treaty with Spain and the Papal dispensation and the Spanish consent to his marriage—but Death said no. Russia was not to occupy and settle western North America as he had dreamed; and a little Spanish girl withdrew into a convent to add one more touching romance to the history of the new world.

An American, visiting the Russian Imperial Cabinet about that time, was shown the Czar's wardrobe. "In several other rooms we saw great piles of furs," he wrote in his diary, "sent as tribute from different Provinces of the Empire. Some of the furs were very rare and valuable, coats made of some of them cost 80,000 rubles. But such a coat will probably be made out of three or four hundred skins. These furs are frequently given as presents by the Emperor." In 1927, the Soviet government discovered in

Leningrad the Czarina's furs scattered through refrigerating cellars of several palaces of former grand dukes and other members of the old Russian nobility, comprising an enormous collection of great value.

Such riches could not be kept for ever secret nor long in bounds, and from the other end of the continent of North America, other men focused similar visions, tintured with philanthropy, on the Pacific coast. The breakup of England's colonial powers brought at least one great financial genius into the fur trade with fewer short-comings than the English and more realism than the French. This was John Jacob Astor.

Astor entered the fur trade late in its history.¹ He had arrived in America at the end of the Revolution in 1783. Within twenty years he had come to the head of the industry with millions at his command. By 1807 he was beginning to dream of world empire with the Pacific coast as his base. He planned to build a great fur mart at the mouth of the Columbia River from which sailing vessels of every kind would make regular voyages to Asia, to Europe, and to the American cities on the eastern seaboard. "It would indeed be a smooth glittering golden round," said Bancroft. "Furs from Astoria to Canton, teas and silk and rich Asiatic merchandise to New York, then back again to the Columbia with beads and bells and blankets, guns, knives, tobacco and rum." This city would be the germ of a new republic, a kind of twin sister to the United States.

With this in mind he dispatched the *Beaver* with a band of colonists and a band of French-Canadian *voyageurs*. Later he sent the supply ship, the *Tonquin* to the coast. This was ill-manned. The Captain antagonized everybody and earned the hatred of the Indians who one day boarded the vessel and massacred every one of its crew. Two, hiding in a hold, next day blew up the vessel with a couple of hundred Indians on board. This was the end of that part of the story. Overland, Astor had sent another expedition under the leadership of Wilson P. Hunt and Ramsay Crooks. After leaving St. Louis, this party joined forces for a while with

¹ For full account see "Gold of Ophir" by Sydney Greenbie, Chap. 7.

Manuel Lisa, the Spaniard, but suspicion, enmity and rivalry terminated that alliance in short order. They pressed on alone. Months of untold hardship burdened their way. They finally reached the Pacific, made the beginning of a settlement, and part of the expedition dragged its way back to New York to render account to their Croesus. With the destruction of the *Tonquin* and the coming of the war of 1812 the project met its doom. The post was captured by the English; the men sold out to the Northwest Company, and Astor was half a million dollars poorer than when he began his enterprise which he hoped would undermine the forces of the Hudson's Bay and Northwest Companies. He now gave up the notion for ever. It was a great vision and in its own time apparently a foolish one, but it has been more than realized since in the political and commercial development of the Pacific States.

The rest of the story of this chapter lies in the domain of diplomacy and military maneuvering between the United States and Great Britain for the control of the forts and trading posts within the fur fields of the northwest territory. The United States after 1816 enacted legislation for the regulation of the trade with the Indians and licensed American citizens who engaged in it. Five years later, England repressed the destructive rivalry between the various companies and brought them to joint action. But this is for a later chapter. The absentee directors, eager for profits but unwilling to sully their hands or to risk their persons in the maelstrom of wilderness traffic, had been supplanted by the practical visionaries who sought through leadership in the new world to build a state out of chaos.

CHAPTER XVI

The Forest Is Ours

A NUMBER of trappers were gathered round their camp fire in jovial discourse. Before the immense silences that circled round them, pricked only by memories and disappointments, they felt small indeed. Even the powers of their own passions and the consciousness of their own courage failed to withstand the invincible hopelessness of the driving years of trapping still before them. To drown their fears they turned to boasting and exaggeration of their witnessed exploits. An old French *bateau* man, flushed with drink, not to be outdone by these young upstarts, fairly shrieked his little saga against the hundreds of miles of silence that engulfed them.

"I have now been forty-two years in this country," he shouted. "For twenty-four I was a light canoe man; I required but little sleep, but sometimes got less than I required. No portage was too long for me; all portages were alike. My end of the canoe never touched the ground till I saw the end of it. Fifty songs a day were nothing to me. I could carry, paddle, walk and sing with any man I ever saw. During that period I saved the lives of ten Bourgeois, and was always the favorite, because when others stopped to carry out a bad step, and lost time, I pushed on—over rapids, over cascades, over chutes; all were the same to me. No water, no weather, ever stopped the paddle or the song. I had twelve wives in the country; and was once possessed of fifty horses and six running dogs, trimmed in the first style. I was then like a Bourgeois, rich and happy; no Bourgeois had better-dressed wives than I; no Indian chief finer horses; no white man better harnessed or swifter dogs. I beat all Indians at the race, and no white man ever passed me in the chase. I wanted for nothing;

and I spent all my earnings in the enjoyment of pleasure. Five hundred pounds twice told, have passed through my hands; although now I have not a spare shirt to my back, nor a penny to buy one. Yet, were I young again, I should glory in commencing the same career again. I would gladly spend another half-century in the same fields of enjoyment. There is no life as happy as a voyageur's life; none so independent; no place where a man enjoys so much variety and freedom as in the Indian country. Huzza! Huzza! pour le pays suavage!"

His outburst was received with good-natured tolerance. The old man flushed with embarrassment at his own emotions; he sank back in silence; the flame went out. For hundreds of miles round about there was no other human voice, nor ears to hear this strange Aside.

Such was the *coureur de bois*, the *bois brulé*, the *bateau* man, the trapper, the hunter, the fisher—the pioneer of pioneers. No company could have held its head above its own monopoly without them. Joyous and adventurous as were their lives, they were subjected to a discipline such as only barbarism knows how to impose, and a loyalty known only to civilization. Some of the restraints of civilization they had left behind, but a greater power than convention held their lives in absolute control. Nomads free to wander through the forests, they were compelled to keep to their traps in circumscribed areas; unhampered by checks and hindrances from other men's daily wishes, they spent days and weeks and months by themselves, lonely, ever on the alert, self-dependent burden-bearers. And the excesses into which they rushed the moment they returned to the posts where some semblance of civilization obtained only proved the desperateness of their lonely situations in the woods. They did little writing, as little of an adverse nature would have got beyond the sharp eyes of their governors; but now and then a trapper left a record of his emotions, clear and distinct.

"The history of my career," said a servant of the company, McLean, "may serve as a warning to those who may be disposed to enter the Hudson's Bay Company's service. They may learn

that from the moment they embark in the company's canoes at Lachine or in their ships at Gravesend, they bid adieu to their families and friends, probably for ever; for if they should remain long enough to attain the promotion that allows them the privilege of revisiting their native land—a period of from twenty to twenty-five years—what changes does not this life exhibit in a much shorter time? They bid adieu to all the comforts and conveniences of civilized life, to vegetate at some desolate, solitary post hundreds of miles, perhaps, from any other human habitation save the wigwam of the savage; without any other society than that of their own thoughts, or of the two or three humble individuals who share their exile. They bid adieu to all the refinement and cultivation of civilized life, not unfrequently becoming semi-barbarous—so altered in habits and sentiments that they not only become attached to savage life, but eventually lose all relish for any other.”

Yet life at a post was the lesser trial. It was at least stationary. But the trappers who had to cover hundreds of miles to watch their traps, or those whose duty it was to keep in the tracks of the Indians to gather their pelts and see that they did not dispose of them to rival companies, were ever on the go. The trappers had some sort of central headquarters. A group of men sometimes worked together, one keeping headquarters with eternal vigilance, the others ranging twenty miles or more, and returning at night for mutual protection. Even then the gun is hardly out of hand. While one man bends over to set the trap, with his left hand, his right hand is on the trigger; while ranging, his ears are ever cocked so that he might rush back to camp upon the slightest sound of danger. There is always an obstacle to overcome, thirst to slake, hunger to fight down, fears to stifle. To the man assigned to hunt the Indian hunters, life was even more precarious still. He had to carry a week's supply of food in which time he was expected to trail the Indian tribe “by God and by guess.” There was nothing definite about the route of the Indian who had to follow the wayward impulses of the furbearer. Yet in spite of falling snow, the trained instinct of the

white man was supposed at all times to keep him in touch with the savage.

At Athabaska there was a clerk named King, "an experienced trader, of a bold and active character, and of a Herculean figure." The new fur company had an assistant named Lamotte, "a young man of a respectable Canadian family, of a spirited and active disposition." Word was received at the post that some Indians had brought a stock of peltries, and both these men were ordered to proceed post haste to secure them. King got there first and obtained all but one bundle. When Lamotte arrived he began a fight over it, and shot King dead. Lamotte was arrested, but later released when the two companies coalesced. This was but an incident in the hardened life of these soldiers of the fur trade.

Downright in their relations with each other, towards the Indians they were often forced to employ the astuteness of the diplomat. Vividly does Alexander Ross describe this art. "One of the greatest pleasures here alluded to," he says, "consists in doing homage to the great. A chief arrives; the honor of waiting upon him in a servile capacity falls to your share, if you are not above your business. You go forth to meet him; invite him in; see him seated; and, if need require it, you untie his shoes, and dry his socks. You next hand him food, water and tobacco; and you must smoke along with him. After which you must listen with grave attention to all he has got to say on Indian topics, and show your sense of the value of his information by giving him some trinkets, and some times even articles of value, in return. But the grand point of all this ceremony is to know how far you should go in these matters, and when you should stop. Nor must you forget that Indians are acute observers of men and things; and generally possess retentive memories. By overdoing the thing, you may entail on yourself endless troubles."

In all things left very much to his own devices, the trapper and the hunter developed great capacity for endurance and judgment. These winterers, as were called the men who followed the Indians on the hunt, looked with scorn upon such tenderfeet as

only occasionally visited the outlying posts and demanded their daily portion of pork. *Mangeurs de lard* was a term of approval, and their softness a pin-cushion for every ribald jest. Against these stood the type such as Hugh Glass, who, after being attacked and mangled by a grizzly bear, crawled a hundred miles on his belly till he reached a fort.

That fort, that post, that cluster of humans was the focal point of all their lonely thoughts, the lodestone of all their emotions. For months the trappers waited hopefully for the New Year holidays to bathe their souls in festivities, and whenever two or more gathered in the forests, the topic of conversation was these distant celebrations. Every man did his utmost to reach some post for that occasion. Even to-day there are posts on Hudson's Bay that go two years at a time without any communication with the outer world, while one post of Russian trappers did not hear of the fall of the Czar till ten years after the revolution. No wonder that before setting off on any long canoe trip, the *voyageur* hung his votive offering in the chapel of Saint Anne, patron saint of travelers, and they cheered themselves with chansons

Now where are all the gay raftmen?

Now where are all the gay raftmen?

To winter camp gone up are they,

Bang on the rim,

Let them pass on, gay raftmen!

Bang on the rim, bang, bang!

Mustered from scattered snowbound regions, they would at last set off for Montreal or St. Louis, or New Orleans. The task was now less lonely, but not less hazardous. The large canoe with but a few thicknesses of paper between them and death, was never a light nor simple fixture. When you fill a forty-foot bark with four tons of skins or merchandise, and add eight husky men to it, it requires some labor and some skill to manage it over current and rapids on a journey that runs into weeks. Nor was it all just gliding over the streams through lush forests. From river to river the freight had to be carried, canoes and all, a hundred and eighty pounds per man, rain or shine, hungry or ill, with pauses

here and there for a breath of tobacco. And these voyages, with all their hazards, with all their delays, with all the dangers of attack from Indian, were expected to be made in record time, and in record time they were made.

At last they arrived again at "civilization." With the least delay, these lonely men would plunge into dissipation and wild carousing. Reckless in the wilderness, they became extravagant at the posts, their vocations making of such thrift as they practiced only an avenue to disaster. They threw in their entire earnings in one grand spree, sometimes as much as six thousand dollars at a fling, and seldom were they able to remain idle for more than three or four weeks. To all this the company was not averse, for it bound the trapper to it by favors and advances, and the reckless one would help himself to supplies, traps and horses to the extent of thousands of dollars and slip back into the wilderness again with no other guarantee but his word of honor. A thousand men would gather at the fort, singing, dancing, carousing, amidst all the unperfumed voluptuousness.

It was often necessary for the women to remove all weapons from the feast. Nevertheless, as Umphreville tells us, "as they cannot part with their teeth, it is not unusual to see some of them the next morning without a nose. . . . In these affrays no regard is paid to relationship, brothers and sisters often engaging each other." An Indian approached the surgeon one day with the remark: "Look here, man, here my nose" which he held out to the doctor, demanding that he put it on again. Much of the fighting was of course over the squaws, but in this the women themselves proudly took their part.

Behind all the carousing was the Company, and a dance to his *voyageurs* and their women was a diplomatic treat never to be overlooked by the governor of a post who would be successful in his trading. The fur merchants made full use of the passions of the men, encouraged them to take to themselves native women in marriage, while white women were regarded as obstacles to advancement. "Oor ain fish-guts to oor ain sea-maws" was the motto of the Board of Managers. Lord Selkirk even charged that

"promotion is given to those who have been guilty" of acts of violence, and that one trader gave an Indian who bothered him a dose of laudanum in a glass of grog. When the man died, a fight ensued, the men fled, leaving behind them a whole winter's collection of furs to the enhancement of the trader.

Still, the trapper was not quite untouched by the mystic influences of the great silent places. Ross assures us that "you can enjoy the pleasures of religion to better advantage, serve your God to more perfection, and be a far better Christian than were your lot cast in the midst of the temptations of a busy world." Bill Williams, one of the most successful of trappers, began his career as a missionary to the Indians, but the necromancy of the mountains took his soul in tow and he thereafter let God genially alone. Old Jedediah Smith was reputed to be the most devout and religious of all fur traders; but when Daniel Harmon from Vermont tried to put the quietus on the noisy Sabbaths, he was advised that in this country there was no Sabbath, and no God nor devil either.

The *coureur de bois*, the *bois brulé*, the trapper have taxed the pens of Americans from Irving and Parkman down to Zane Grey. Leatherstocking, with his blanket and deer-skin moccasins, his "government" hanging round his girdle, and his "society" in his tobacco pouch, was no saint. Yet, in seeking for a parallel to his half-savage Vikings, who "were as treacherous and deceitful as they were brave and cruel" and who "knew towards their enemies no honourable code," Keary claims to have found it only in the Western States of America. "There we should see the same recklessness, the same stoicism, something of the same magnanimity; we should find a code of honour, if not as strict, certainly as fantastic as the Viking's; and finally we should find a grim humour almost the exact counterpart of his."

With all their hardships and opportunities for speculation, the trapper carried a grim loyalty and an unimpeachable honesty through the wilderness. Dismissed somewhat summarily one winter at Fort Union, Montana, Alexander Harvey was ordered to report at St. Louis if he wished to be reinstated. With a dog, and

some blankets, afoot and alone, amidst hostile tribes and blinding blizzards, he traveled 2,500 miles and arrived early in March, ready to take on again his burden of loyalty. Umphreville, upbraiding the Company for its negligences, describes with passionate sincerity the life of the servant of the Company who finds himself under the displeasure of the Governor. In retaliation, Lord Selkirk visited his wrath on the status of the servants of the other company, the Northwesters. He describes the "beggarly hovels" of the *voyageurs*, "habitations . . . usually occupied by the families of *voyageurs* employed in the North West Company, and who seldom or never remit anything for their support." He estimated that the Company must employ about two thousand men, at wages of from \$150 to \$500 a year, and that the gross return of their trade was about \$750,000 a year. He implies that the cause of the destitution lay in the drink men were encouraged to buy at \$8 a quart though it had cost only \$1 a gallon.

But such treatment seldom impaired their faithfulness. Among themselves, touched by common danger and mutual aid, they were bound by ties of years of brooding loneliness. Often they risked the lives of several well and active men rather than abandon one dying comrade. Boast and carouse they might, in their moments of exhilaration, but then came the realization of life gone by, with visions of ever receding homesteads. In such moments they would dream of home and wife and children, houses with double doors and painted ceilings, and rest from wandering. When after a lifetime of labor in the forests, Alexander Ross determined not to accept the management of the Sanke country, the Governor asked him what he could do for him.

"Your Excellency has always been a friend to me," he replied, "and I think you are still disposed to add another favor to those I have already received—grant me a spot of land in Red River, that I can call my own, and I shall be very thankful." His wish was granted. A hundred acres free of all expense.

There was no contribution to America that in the long last was more important than the trail-blazing of the voyageur-trapper. The great trader drew all he could out of the land for mansions

in Europe; the pioneer put his labor into the land and claimed his possessions; but the vast host of toilers in the woods made of this wilderness a place fit for the habitation of man, and they carried away with them little more than the laughter and the annual feast, while their songs rolled down the decades to lure the immigrant and cheer him on his way.

CHAPTER XVII

Zions and Sodoms in the Wilderness

THE new world was not two centuries old when all its pristine innocence was transformed into the thing from which many had fled when they departed the shores of Europe. Father Le Jeune, writing home about 1635, said, "And now we see a great number of very honorable persons land here every year, who come to cast themselves into our great forests as if into the bosom of peace, to live there with more piety, more immunity, and more liberty. The din of Palaces, the great uproar of lawyers, litigants, and solicitors is here only at a thousand leagues' distance. Exactions, deceits, thefts, rapes, assassinations, treachery, enmity, black malice, are seen here only once a year, in the letters and Gazettes which people bring from Old France. Not that we have not our maladies, but they are easier to cure; and, besides, no money is needed to pay for the attendance of the physicians. Would to God that souls enamored of peace could see how sweet is life remote from the Gehenna of a thousand superfluous compliments, of the tyranny of lawsuits, of the ravages of war, and of an infinite number of other savage beasts that we do not encounter in our forests."

This idyllic vacuum did not last very long. If any place brings out the inherent differences between men, it is the wilderness. Democracy and primitive life are at the opposite poles. Those who could, ruled; the others obeyed; and the raw, conventionless strife left little room for sentiment and idealism. From the very outset, baronial pretensions sought to whip the spirit of the wild into submission. Claims were prosecuted with ruthless determination. Colt's revolver lays a real claim to being a maker of history.

To the dreamer, the visionary, the philanthropist, America always loomed up as the Zion in the promised land. They saw

about them in Scotland, Germany, France, England, destitution caked in despair. In the new world they believed that not only would they find an outlet for their own commercial enterprise, but settlement where the better elements in discouraged humanity might flame again into life. And the fur trade promised to pay the cost of Utopia. But because human nature is with some truth said to be unchangeable, it has always been somewhat dangerous to tamper with it. Acadia, Kildonan, Astoria. . . .

Foremost among these dreamers was a Scotch nobleman who was said to have had "fighting blood in his veins,"—Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk. By one of those inversions of human experience, it happened that when Lord Selkirk came into his earldom, the Scotch Highlands were undergoing a process of growth the exact antithesis of the developments then going on in America. While the American forests were being cleared for agriculture, the Scotch highlands were being converted into deer forests. Selkirk's sympathy for the evicted peasants led him to the philanthropic project of founding a colony in America. He purchased a tract of land from the Hudson's Bay Company, and sent several groups of settlers—one to Prince Edward Island, another to Upper Canada, and finally further inland, to the prairies where Winnipeg now stands. Here he furnished some eight hundred destitute Scots with transport, means and sustenance, and the enthusiasm for establishing themselves on the earth again.

Ten years of simple, slow plodding went by, and the colony seemed safe and secure. But Selkirk, who had now become a chief factor in the Hudson's Bay Company, fell afoul of the Northwest Company, and they sent their *bois brulés*, those half-breeds with twice the deviltry of most men, into the plains to uproot the settlement. Without provocation, they fell upon the unwarned settlers and in two successive raids wiped clean the prairies, leaving the blood-spattered soil to the mustard weed.

When Lord Selkirk got word of this, he set out with a hundred Swiss soldiers to the rescue of his people. But he was too late. Though he revived the colony for a moment, Selkirk, still a

young man, returned to England, broken-hearted, to die a few years later at Pau. His enemies in and out of the Hudson's Bay Company pursued him with the usual hostility of the profiteer for the idealist, and the romantic historians gloss over this story of crime, savagery and genial murder in their tales of the winning of the west. The companies had no time for settlements. Here ends the Saga of 1815.

If there was little room for Zions in the wilderness, Sodoms there were aplenty. From the very soil itself, almost, there sprung up here and there petty principalities, feudal in all their make-up, colorful in appearance, continental in scope. The flare for courtly life found little expression in chivalry to women; there were no women to pay court to, apart from an occasional half-breed damsel or the rarely beautiful daughter of a full-blooded chief. Nor was there in the wilderness the call for knightly government such as seemed to spring up spontaneously in Europe in the Middle Ages. For as a matter of fact, rule though the British and the French did in America, they were all aliens, trying to squeeze out of an unnurtured soil the sweet juices of civilization, and each man was a law unto himself, with a distant corporation pulling the hidden wires of enmity and ill-will.

Still there developed certain centers of trade and activity in which welled up much of the baronial love of display and the interplay of power and pride. The love of bright colors, killed by democracy and revived by golf, blossomed in those days into a passion for display, and the turban, kerchief and sash made of the summer days a pageant through the wilderness. And as it passed down to the post it massed larger and larger until it took on the air of an imperial procession. At the head of it was generally the bourgeois—the Nabob of the wilderness.

The bourgeois at his post exercised almost as much power as an English Lord. If his subordinates were respectable, he shared his table with them; if not, he dined in regal isolation. "The common *mangeur de lard* would no sooner presume unbidden to hold social intercourse with his bourgeois than would a soldier with his regimental commander." The bourgeois was carried on

board his canoe upon the back of some sturdy fellow appointed for the purpose; a mattress was placed in the canoe for him to sit upon; his "little cherubs" would disport themselves about him; even his spaniel had his sacred spot at his feet. His pipe was handed to him and his silken banner was unfurled—and this Nabob of the wilderness was borne down the stream by his slaves whose very freedom was their greatest form of bondage. Upon arrival at some post, friends who had not seen each other for years would shake hands heartily, and "even the bourgeois goes through this mode of salutation with the meanest. There is perhaps no country where the ties of affection are more binding than here. Each addresses his comrades as his brothers; and all address themselves to the bourgeois with reverence, as if he were their father."

A hundred miles a day was a fair average for such a journey, with only here and there a pause for "pipe-joy" yet without permitting the headway of the canoe to slacken for a moment. For meals they beached. Blazing fires, with kettles boiling! In twenty minutes the canoe is gliding off again into the forest, with the chansons of the *bateau* men ringing from glen to cove. If the way is clear, the night's rest is prolonged; but if trouble broods in storm or strife, then there may be but four hours' rest per night, and sometimes not even that, with days on end of ceaseless labor at the paddles. There is no portage serious enough to frustrate their passage. At last the long transcontinental journey is about to end.

"When about to arrive at the place of their destination," wrote Alexander Ross, "they dress with neatness, put on their plumes, and a chosen song is raised. They push up against the beach as though they meant to dash the canoe into splinters; but most adroitly back their paddles at the right moment, whilst the foreman springs on shore, and, seizing the prow, arrests the vessel in its course. On this joyful occasion, every person advances to the waterside, and great guns are fired to announce the bourgeois's arrival. . . . From every distant depot of the company, a special light canoe is fitted out annually, to report their transactions.

The one from the Columbia sets out from the Pacific Ocean the first of April, and, with the regularity and the rapidity of a steamboat, it reaches Fort William, on Lake Superior, the first of July; remaining there till the 20th of the month, when it takes its departure back, and, with an equal degree of precision, arrives at Fort George, at the mouth of the Columbia River on the 20th of October. A light canoe, likewise, leaving the Pacific, reaches Montana in the hundred days; and one from Montana to the Pacific in the same space of time: thus performing a journey of many thousands of miles without delay, stoppage, or scarcely any repose, in the short period of little more than six months."

The bourgeois was entirely the product of the wilderness. No European stateliness or nobility could function in the forests. Lord Selkirk's idealism was bound to split in the rapids of American life. Only a man who had sped with seven-leagued boots could gain any ascendancy in the fluent life of the new world. Foremost among these bourgeois was Alexander Mackenzie, discoverer of the river bearing his name, and a man who had risen from the ranks to a position of dominance in the North West Fur Company. "The man who but a few years before had been thought fit only to eat horseflesh and shoot at a mark," says Ross, "was now, from his perseverance and success in recovering a losing trade, become so popular among all parties in the fur-trade that we find him snugly placed in the new 'deed-poll' as a sachem of the higher-class." The river of his own ego had carried Mackenzie so incessantly throughout the country that he became known as "Perpetual Motion."

Mackenzie as head of the Northwest Company was at first friendly with Lord Selkirk, the head of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the amalgamation of the two seemed for a time probable. But Selkirk, acquiring lands in Manitoba as extensive as the whole of Great Britain, was the agriculturist, while Mackenzie was the hunter and the trapper; and the struggle between Cain and Abel, between Jacob and Esau, was before long reenacted in the land of the Indian. Mackenzie won, but death took both men

within a month of each other, and the following year, 1821, the two companies were united. But meanwhile, Mackenzie had displayed his genius as an explorer with a vision of westward expansion imperial in its reach; his actual control over men was lordly and elaborate and lasted a full quarter of a century.

At Grand Portage Mackenzie lived a baronial existence, with a hundred men messing together in an enormous hall, at tables weighted with the slaughter of the forests—smoked beaver tails, buffalo tongues and humps, elk meat, fruits and vegetables, beverages from udder and cask, proffered in abundance sufficient to stay not only the immediate hunger and the current thirst, but the hunger and the thirst of the ages and the spite of the exiled. For with all his love of adventure and exploring and power, Mackenzie longed to be out of his savage kingdom, and to recline in the secure and friendly ease of a Scottish castle.

Retiring to Montreal from Grand Portage, Mackenzie entered the seigneurial atmosphere as a step forward in his personal advancement that would lead him backward to Scotland. There he found the genial company of his kind—Alexander Henry, the Frobishers, McGillivray, Hearne. He became a member of the exclusive club called the Beaver Club, to which only such fur-traders as had wintered in the northwest could belong. The members were mostly wealthy traders, living in their stone mansions whose prison-like exteriors belied the palatial comforts within—with double windows and double doors and hot-air heating systems—entertained like rajahs and mandarins, and the echoes of their laughter ran down the decades to the middle of last century. Even the lordly Livingston who had blandly bought the heart out of the fur territories from Napoleon—beavers, trappers, and half-breeds all in the bargain—and who was to the English traveler Maude, “the only good-tempered Democrat” he had ever met—even Livingston felt himself honored by the entertainment and hospitality of these fur traders. Joseph Frobisher became known to every respectable stranger that came within the limits of Canada, and of the eight thousand inhabitants

of Montreal, these old nor'westers were the wealthiest and the most sought after. Noted travelers published elaborate accounts of their entertainments; Maude, who was there in 1800, detailing that he found twenty-two guests at Frobisher's town house, including Gouverneur Morris and Edward Livingston. His appreciation of the attentions he received is a sort of Byronic rhapsody in prose. "I am now going to take leave, most probably for ever, of Montreal. No place had so won, in so short a time, upon my affections. During the ten days of my ever-to-be-remembered stay here, I have not been allowed to take a single meal at my Inn, except at breakfast, a liberty I would not give up. . . . This kindness was the more flattering as I did not come recommended. . . . I had often heard of the hospitality of Montreal; I now experienced it."

Colonel Landmann was another recipient of their lavishness. He was there at about the same time, and gives us an unexpurgated version of what they meant by a good time. The married men usually withdrew rather early, leaving the unmarried to consume "in earnest and true Highland style"—120 bottles of wine—and arrived "at such a degree of perfection, that we could all give the war-whoop" by four o'clock in the morning. They had to go on to Quebec that morning, but were too drunk to start till noon, and even then "We had both suffered so much through this heavy debauch that it was not until on the fourth day that we arrived at Quebec."

So, while there was little room in the wilderness for Zion, there was plenty of room for Sodom. One thing was lacking after that—Knighthood. Hence these Scotch Lairds retired to their own Highlands. There they purchased vast estates and became real Lords. Mackenzie was knighted, and bought himself an estate at Avock on Moray Firth in Ross-shire. McGillivray paid \$100,000 for an estate at Argyllshire. The new lords, the new bourgeois, the great fur-magnates had come home to Scotland.

There were others. On the shores of the Pacific, M'Dougal, one of Astor's agents, set himself up as a petty satrap, married an

Indian princess, daughter of the chief Comcomly, and attempted to establish an empire of his own. Kendrick, Sturgis, Winship—New Englanders—sought dominion over the rocky shores of Oregon. Throughout the prairies and the plains, great fur factors aspired to kingship from within their firm stockades, and wrote a code of ethics into the wilderness that was often as sordid as it was impressive, as noble after its kind as it was harsh and self-interested. Kenneth Mackenzie, nephew of the explorer, ruled for many years over Fort Union (Montana), whence he spied the plains and the badlands for sight of Indians with beaver skins. The gates of the fort, (now leveled to the ground) would swing wide to let out enticing minstrels with kegs of rum to welcome the barbarians with their pelts, or timorous emissaries would travel for days to the teepees of the Blackfeet to bring them and their skins to the fort on the Missouri. And so over hundreds of miles of roadless terrain the empire of the trapper held sway.

But such empires were destined to be swept away with the flood of immigration. The Hudson's Bay Company built dikes of power and terror to stem these ever menacing tides—but they swept on. The last of the great out-posts to be undermined by settlers was that at Oregon where ruled the iron-willed, yet benevolent and rational factor—Dr. John McLoughlin. Shortly after the amalgamation of the Northwest Company with the Hudson's Bay Company, and three years after the deaths of Selkirk and Mackenzie, McLoughlin was sent out to the Columbia River as governor. For twenty-two years he remained there as the chief factotum. Contrary to the direct instructions of the Company, McLoughlin encouraged, rather than expelled, settlers, and the story of his reign, with his Indian Queen, fills many a page in western history. Living at first in a deer-skin tent, he began the construction of Fort Vancouver. He fostered the cultivation of grain and the rearing of cattle and helped impecunious settlers to get a start. His entertainment was always lavish, and he was particularly proud of the fact that through his support of husbandry he was able to draw so much food for his table from

the immediate neighborhood. When rebuked by the Hudson's Bay Company for his coöperation with American settlers, he resigned and became himself an American citizen.

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The scope and import of these forts and their factors are emphasized by the mystery that still surrounds the medal the United States Government permitted Astor to cast by way of a token to the Indians with whom trade, in competition with the British, was sought at Green Bay, Prairie du Chien, and Fort Union. This was virtually the power to coin money, but Ramsay Crooks, Astor's agent, writing to a representative about it, said: "For Mr. Mackenzie's coat of mail I have sent to England, for nothing of the sort could be found here. His fusil à six coups is ordered from Rochester; and the medals for his outfit are in the hands of the die-maker, who, I hope, will give us good likeness de notre estimable grandpaps. (Astor.) I wrote Washington about them, and the War Office made no objections to our having these ornaments made. Remember they are ornaments, not medals!" They were used down to 1844, and so, symbolically at least, the fur trader was a real potentate, with powers to incite war, if not actually to make it. Sometimes Astor's wealth was estimated in his ability to arm half a million men at a moment's notice, so many people had he scattered through the country working for him, and so absolute was the power that he exercised over the wilderness.

BOOK THREE
REGRETS AND PROSPECTS

CHAPTER XVIII

Presents! Presents! Presents!

THE earth lies prone in a sea of space. No sign of life from aphelion to perihelion. In summer the dust and sand blow wearily over the horizon; in winter the snow drifts wearily over the horizon. The trading post or fort, exposed to the sand and the snow, drowsy and forlorn, stands upon the banks of the muddy river—and waits.

Suddenly the sleepy fort is awake. Though it has no eyes it has seen in all directions. Along the edge of the earth the wayward dust has coagulated into some of God's Adams, or the frozen snow has darkened with the shadows of Eve. The fort is alive. Rum that was concentrated to lessen the cost of transport to the fort is augmented so that those who are going to carry it away will have to leave their burdens of pelts behind. No two things can occupy the same space at the same time. . . . The Indians are coming to trade.

But there can be no trade without presents. Man is the only animal that likes to deceive himself. The fox fools the crow, but never his brother foxes; but man fools himself. Hence the white man "gives" the red man a glass of welcome, the red man knows that the white man expects his furs in return and that the rum is going to distort the bargain for him, but he enters willingly into the play of self-deception. But without the pretense there would be no presents, and without presents there is no trade. And all must be conducted according to established form and undisturbing habit. Greetings exchanged, formalities begin.

"During this visit," says Umphreville, "the Chief is drest out at the expense of the Factory, in the following manner; a coarse cloth coat, either red or blue, lined with baize, and having regimental cuffs; and a waist coat and breeches of baize. The suit is

ornamented with orris lace. He is also presented with a white or check shirt; his stockings are of yarn, one of them red, the other blue, and tied below the knee with worsted garters; his Indian shoes are sometimes put on, but he frequently walks in his stocking-feet; his hat is coarse, and bedecked with three ostrich feathers of various colours, and a worsted sash tied round the crown; a small silk handkerchief is tied round his neck, and this completes his dress.

"The guests being now equipped, bread and prunes are brot and set before the Captain, of which he takes care to fill his pockets, before they are carried out to be shared in his tent; a two gallon keg of brandy . . ."—and then follows the procession to the tent with its accompanying debauch lasting for days and "bordering on madness." After they have come to, they again smoke the pipe of peace, and the chief makes a little speech.

"You told me last year to bring many Indians to trade, which I promised to do; you see I have not lied; here are a great many young men come with me; use them kindly, I say; let them trade good goods; let them trade good goods, I say! We lived hard last winter and hungry, the powder being short measure and bad; being short measure and bad, I say; Tell your servants to fill the measure, and not to put their thumbs within the brim; take pity on us, take pity on us, I say! We paddle a long way to see you; we love the English. Let us trade good black tobacco, moist and hard twisted; let us see it before it is opened. Take pity on us; take pity on us, I say! The guns are bad, let us trade light guns, small in the hand, and well shaped, with locks that will not freeze in the winter, and red gun cases. Let the young men have more than measure of tobacco; cheap kettles, thick, and high. Give us good measure of cloth; let us see the old measure; do you mind me? The young men love you, by coming so far to see you; take pity, take pity, I say; and give them good goods; they like to dress and be fine. Do you understand me?"

From the very earliest moments of intercourse between the Indian and the white, they met each other with gifts in their

hands. The white man with trinkets, the red, with furs. Each thought the other a fool for over-rating the token given, but such is the nature of the bargain hunter. It was to the interests of the Indians at all costs to keep on good terms with the French or the English or the Dutch. They were always allaying the ire of the one by arousing the ire of the other. Nicolas Perrot (1665 or 1670) received "Five beaver robes to serve as an emetic for the ill-will and vengeance which he might retain in his heart" but it seems that the dose was not quite enough, for in 1687 some outraged Indians destroyed \$40,000 worth of furs which Perrot had accumulated by such methods at Green Bay.

Presents, presents, presents! From the day of the first contact, the giving and receiving of presents was part of the economic life of the wilderness. Lescarbot tells us that "The Indian chief . . . made the said (John) Ribaut a present . . . of a large skin wrought all over with divers wild animals, represented and portrayed in so life-like a manner that nothing was lacking save life." Arent van Curler, cousin of Van Rensselaer, found that wherever he went the Indians presented him with coats of beaver skins, making him promise to come and trade with them the next year and pointing out that they only too frequently traveled long distances with their skins to find upon their arrival that there were no cloths and no axes and no kettles. Throughout the centuries, no matter how organized and systematized the trade became, the giving and receiving of "presents" was as inviolable as the tipping system is in a hotel to-day. Colonel Chicken down in the Savannah region among the Cherokees, received, though he always went whip in hand, loads of presents from the Indians. "As for the Skines," he reports to headquarters, somewhat apologetically, "which the Indians were pleased to make me a present of (and which I could not refuse without affronting them) I know not how to gett them down without I have horses sent for them, Your honour being well Acquainted with the bulk of an Indian's Present of Skines."

When the son of Iwanchou laid before the King of France a crown of porcelain beads, the King and Queen presented him

with six suits of clothes, of gold, velvet, satin and scarlet. When he brought them back with him to Canada, the Governor thought better than to let one young upstart native parade the wilds alone in such array, and distributed these six suits among the other chiefs. The chiefs in turn next sent a little dress of a papoose for the Dauphin, explaining, with becoming modesty, that it was not a present but merely a plaything for the child. Six years later (1645) the King of France asked for and received four Indian garments.

The giving and receiving of presents was as much a part of the etiquette of the country as is Christmas giving. The most popular gift was wampum or porcelain beads. The missionaries gave presents as an inducement to conversion, or "to hush the cries . . . and wipe away the tears" of the converted. If a porcelain collar was not enough, they "offered a second present to calm their minds, the seat of all these griefs; and, as the seat of the mind is in the head, he made them a crown of the proffered collar." A third present, if necessary, was "a little Kettle, full of excellent beverage . . . in order to dispel their grief and apply the remedy to their very hearts and bowels. This was accompanied by a beautiful collar. And, in order to wipe away the blood, and implant joy in every breast, leaving no trace of sadness anywhere, the Father presented four Beaver-skins to the four Iroquois Nations, one for each."

Thus was peace between the Hurons and the Algonquins sealed, but it cost some twenty-three presents—for the dead, for the peace, for the Faith, and for the Truth. The Indians invariably gave presents to the strangers, and the priests never hesitated to accept them, even using them in part as trade and as support for the missions. Not to accept a present was an affront, but sometimes it was not possible to take away a lot of little things, and "As they are of no great value, we did not burden ourselves with them."

The custom in time became a nuisance to all, though quite a profitable game to some, particularly the commandants. One missionary was compelled to protest to the Governor about it. "It is



Indians at trader's hut

this, that—not Content with the Constant profit which they derive from the trade—They have found means to convince the Court that it is necessary to supply them with considerable funds for the purpose of making presents to the savages—either to interest them in our concerns, our designs, and our undertakings, or to reward them when they render services that may be deemed worthy of recompense. This is truly a fine pretext; but it is certain that never was anything less needed with regard to the savages. The sole effect which this has produced upon the savages has been, to teach them to be exacting in requiring that they be solicited; to make it necessary that all their actions and all their emotions be purchased by dint of presents.” According to him, great sums were subtracted for such gifts, but only a fraction of them was actually used as gifts.

These presents were not mere gratuities, nor given in token of good-will alone, but partly as indirect remuneration for services rendered by guide or host, partly as advances on future stocks of furs to insure their final arrival, partly to mollify and prevent miscalculations and misunderstandings. Mainly, however, they served to cement alliances and link these with the monopolies. While in our relations with the Amerind we generally smiled at these presents, it is to be remembered that they have always been an element in diplomatic relations the world over, sometimes as disguised tribute, sometimes as indirect revenue. And while the system deceived no one, pleased some and was exceedingly profitable to others, it could never be suppressed. Bribery and present giving are to trade what the dowry is to marriage. The Indians themselves soon began to realize that the custom was demoralizing and that while they listened respectfully to all the good talk that usually went with the presents, it seldom “lasts any longer than the present he makes them.”

In the clumsy intercourse of but little understood language, the presents became themselves symbols as definitive as words. And the nature and the type of gift expressed the aspirations and ideals of both races, and sometimes touched the hearts of both savage and civilian. Replying to some gifts of the Fathers an

Illinois chief rose, and, resting his hand on the head of a little slave he was giving them as a guide, said: "I thank thee, Black Gown, and thee, O Frenchman, for having taken so much trouble to come to visit us. Never has the earth been so beautiful, or the sun so bright, as to-day; Never has our river been so Calm, or so clear of Rocks, which your canoes have Removed in passing; never has our tobacco tasted so good, or our corn appeared so fine, as We now see Them. Here is my son, whom I give thee to Show thee my Heart. I beg thee to have pity on me, and on all my Nation. It is thou who Knowest the great Spirit who has made us all."

How sad a turn came to this welcome! There was give and take of evil as of good, and the difficulty lay in the under-valuation of things fully as much as in their appreciation. Had not the Indians from the first thought little of their beaver which squirmed about their feet in useless numbers, and had not the inventive genius of the European over-stocked the counters of their stores, the story would have been a different one. Human nature is at the mercy of the laws of nature. The Indians needed the metals, knives and woollens. The flooding of these markets constantly up-set the relations of the races. It needed something more than trade to bind the nations to one another—nor was the God of the missionaries as staunch an amalgam as the hearts of the Indian maidens.

For nothing brought the white men and the red men nearer to each other than love and gifts. What more could a haughty chief do to show his admiration for the white man than to make him a gift of his daughter. And many of the more statesmanly officers and explorers sought not only to bind the individual Indian tribes to them by marriage and alliance, but to intertwine the tribes in like manner. From the European point of view, this was shortsighted, as nothing made their penetration easier than the bitter enmities of the tribes. Yet therein lay the wisdom of such men as Duluth who while making maps was also an excellent match-maker. "In order that peace might last longer among them," he wrote, "I believed that I could not better cement it than by causing marriages to be made mutually between the

different nations. . . . I caused them to hold meetings in the forest, at which I was present, in order to hunt together, feast, and thus draw closer the bonds of friendship."

This was well not only for the sake of keeping the Indians friendly to the whites, but of keeping the white trapper content among the Indians. The Indians were eager enough to keep a white man near them. He was their ambassador to that strange world in which otherwise they were certain to be duped. In this the French were more spontaneous, and their marriages with the Indians greater, but the English were more methodical in their procedure. The Lords of Trade of London obtained from the King an injunction with this proviso: "And as a further mark of His Majesty's good will to the Said Indian Nations; You shall give all possible encouragement to inter-marriages between His Majesty's British Subjects and them for which purpose you are to declare in his Majesty's Name, that his Majesty will bestow on every white man being one of his Subjects who Shall marry an Indian Woman, Native and Inhabitant of Nova Scotia, a free gift of the sum of 10 li Sterl: and 50 Acres of Land, free of quit rent for ye Space of 20 years, and the like on any White Woman being his Majesty's Subject who shall Marry an Indian Man, Native and Inhabitant of Nova Scotia, as aforesaid."

The result, added to what we have seen in Chapter X, was not an unmixed blessing. The offspring of these marriages, scornfully referred to as *métifs* or *bois brulés* in time comprised a goodly portion of the population under the ægis of the fur companies. Living under the protection of these extra-legal corporations who drilled it into them that the companies' rights and regulations were always paramount, and knowing nothing of the ethics of business outside the wilderness, they formed a powerful arm of the fur interests in the expulsion of their rivals. It was the half-breeds that wiped out Selkirk's colony, and sixty years later, it was this same element that started the Red River Rebellion (1869) when five hundred of them refused to permit Governor M'Dougal to enter their village. Yet Captain John Franklin, the explorer, who spent quite a long time in the north, looked

upon them as a not unfavorable consequence of the mixture, being good-looking, intelligent, and apt. While, according to Ross, the worst element amongst them was the sons of wealthy fur-traders and clerks who were indulged by their fathers in every vice, but never in the dignity of labor. Nevertheless, barons, noblemen, archdeacons, ethnologists, poets and even senators have married into or have been the children of marriages with the Indian race, vindicating in part at least the stirring challenge:

There the passions cramped no longer shall have scope and breathing place,
I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race.

Hot and cold, these marriages did not always make for harmony between the races. Sorrows often tried the bonds that held them, though not greater sorrows than those that visit even unmixed matings. And frequently, in spite of the opposing tendencies, there emerged loyalties and faithfulnesses seldom found in ordinary marriages. Far down the centuries, when white and copper should have understood each other better, tragedy stumbled in upon them through simple, stupid little misunderstandings.

Upon the Cowlitz River, Washington, ruled Chief How-How with his daughter, Princess How-How. After a battle in which some of his men were killed, he reluctantly yielded to the persuasions of the whites and entered a state of peace with the Iroquois. The white fur-trader, seeking to bind himself to the tribe for the sake of the trade, wooed and won the Princess to wife. After the feastings at the fort, Chief How-How departed, but was inadvertently way-laid by some enemy Indians, causing great confusion. Nothing could convince the chief that the white men didn't have a hand in the treachery, and thenceforth, neither presents nor promises, nor assurances could win back his confidence in the white man. The region had to be abandoned by the traders.

Inch by inch, the Indian was contesting for the soil of his race. It has been pointed out that this was a healthful help in the winning of the continent, rather than a hindrance. It forced the slow intensive development, the acquisition of a character more in keeping with the nature of the country, and has doubtless

given power and poise to the modern American type. By holding back the spread of immigration, it forced its roots down into the soil and assured its permanence. The fur companies were anxious to keep the Indians rovers and hunters; the missionaries sought to bind them to the soil or turn them into city people; the foreign governments wanted to get them out of the way of empire; the land speculator wanted to hound them into the forests; the free trapper wanted to drive them out upon the treeless plains. The Indian was no fool, and tried to pit one of these evils against the other, and to regain some of the spirit of nationalism and unity which, according to men like Morgan and Hale, had, as far back as 1459, promised the Indian a continental civilization.

But for the sake of the white man's arts, the Indian had initiated the white man into the arts of the wilderness, and the love, the passion, the freedom, the fury and the brutality that made up the character of the Indian, passing to the sophisticated European, could not but make for the undoing of the Indian. And the Indian soon knew what it was to be sold into slavery as a man and as a race. Having thousands of white scalps to his discredit, he could point to the white man as a pastmaster in the art as well. He did not know how to pass parliamentary resolutions, perhaps, but he could learn from his white brother, who did.

"RESOLVED (said the Idaho legislature): That three men be appointed to select 25 men to go Indian-hunting, and all those who can fit themselves out shall receive a nominal sum for all scalps they may bring in; and all who cannot fit themselves out shall be fitted out by the committee, and when they bring in scalps it shall be deducted out. That for every scalp be paid \$100; for every squaw, \$50; and \$25 for everything in the shape of an Indian under 10 years of age. That each scalp shall have the curl of the head and each man shall make an oath that the said scalp was taken by the company."

Resolved, answered the Indian chiefs, that "When you go into council with the white man, always remember your country. Do not give it away." The father of Chief Joseph, of the Nez Percés, "cautioned his people to take no presents." But they paid no heed. Fifty years ago, the Indians made their last stand against the whites under Chief Joseph. Three hundred of them, hampered

by their wives and children, kept a trained army of Americans under General Howard from capturing them while they made a retreat through 2,000 miles of enemy country. In the end it was the telegraph and not the poor strategy of the Chief, that foiled him. And in his touching story, Chief Joseph contributed a permanent piece of exquisite prose to American literature.

Tell General Howard that I know his heart. What he told me before—I have it in my heart. I am tired of fighting. Our Chiefs are killed. Looking Glass is dead. Too-hul-hul-sote is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men now, who say “Yes” or “No.” He who led the young men (Joseph’s brother Ollicut) is dead. It is cold, and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people—some of them—have run away to the hills, and have no blankets, no food. No one knows where they are—perhaps freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children, and to see how many of them I can find; maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs, my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands, I will fight no more with the white man.

After the manner of a certain French queen, one might ask: “No blankets? Why don’t you wear beaver skins?” But that luxurious garment was gracing the forms of the men and women of another race.

Yet, when in 1926, we gathered at Fort Union to commemorate the trail blazing of the white man through the northwest, and a dozen hitherto enemy tribes joined us, all their ancestral hatreds dead with their ancestors, withered and aged old Chief Drags Wolf removed a most costly head-dress of eagle feathers that trailed to the ground and put it as a present on the head of Major-General Hugh L. Scott who for forty years had lived among them as friendly-enemy.

Then at Wishram, Washington, right on the banks of the Columbia River, on a square lawn enclosed by tall poplars, beneath a cliff of basalt, we gathered to dedicate a monument to some fur-hunters who first found their way through the region. Presently, an aged Indian chief was helped to his feet on the platform (the only Indian chief in all our historical odyssey that summer who stood on a platform the equal of the white man.) Unsteady on his legs, he made us feel the solidity of the

rocks of the cliffs about; his eyes blind, he made us see the vastness of human vision; a calumet from Minneapolis in his heavy hand swayed with sovereign peace over those sandy dominions; a tongue rattling in a hoarse throat in a language we could not understand, spoke with kindliness and sympathy of the relations between his primitive people and our primitive people. And he urged upon his people to take on the manners of the white, for the men to labor and create, for the women to tend and preserve, and for the children of the Sun to turn their eyes to knowledge and the light.

CHAPTER XIX

Empty Pastures

THE Indian, the buffalo, and the eagle adorn the coinage of our land, but the creature that itself for generations was the coinage has been quite neglected. The beaver which enriched Europe and made the new world possible to pioneer and settler has as yet no permanent place in American memorabilia. Sacrificed on the altar of world progress, it has gone the way of many another animal—made precious by virtual extinction.

The list is long. Man sits upon his grandstand to review the endless procession of wild life on its way to oblivion. The buffalo, the fur-seal, the beaver, the moose, the caribou, the deer, the elk, the antelope, the mountain goat are all going to the realms of the dinosaur and the gigantic lizard. Where once were millions of noble fauna, stampeding the prairies so their thundering hoofs could be heard for miles, a few hundred specimens drag out their lonely lives in empty pastures. And they whose souls were younger brother to Messou, the restorer of the world, and to whom the little Indian children in their morning prayers, as they rushed from their teepees, cried: "Come, Porcupines; come, Beavers; come Elk" have gone far away to a large village where the sun sets.

Inch by inch, the fauna of America has given way before the encroachment of man. The Indian moved back upon the plains, but he moved because the beaver and the bear moved back ahead of him. The white man has spread over the earth, exterminating, subduing and enslaving, and confining the Indians upon reservations, the buffalos in zoos, and the foxes in farms. And the more he clears the larger antagonists from the face of the earth, the more does he intensify the struggle of man with nature.

The extermination of the fur-bearer in Europe, as we have seen,

turned men to America. The true beaver originated in Europe. The American beaver was a smaller species. Now there are only a few districts along the Elbe, Rhone, and in Scandinavia, where he may be found. Armed with a sharpened stone, man turned with fury upon the beasts about him. "He proceeded to destroy utterly the nobler fauna of free and beautiful creatures—many of them working for his good had he but known," says Havelock Ellis, "and replaced it by a degraded fauna, virtually of his own creation, and yet only existing to prey upon him. He found the reindeer and the elk and the wolf and the brown bear and the lynx and the beaver and the otter and the buzzard and the bittern and the water-ousel and the golden eagle and the sea eagle and the osprey and the great auk. And he killed them all. And in their stead he placed by countless millions the rabbit and the sparrow and the earthworm and the caterpillar and the rat and the cockroach and the bug, scarcely or at all found there before he brought them, and they have flourished and preyed. . . . Everywhere we see Man to-day surrounded by a cloud of animal and vegetable parasitic vermin, from rodents to bacteria, multiplying as he multiplies and even more rapidly, so that he can never overcome it, preying upon him and slaying him, rendering him, indeed, in the process so poisonous that when a boatfull of apparently healthy civilized Europeans is landed on a remote island inhabited by simple natural men it has sometimes left death-spreading infection behind. The old Greek myth of Chronos and Zeus has at length been translated into prosaic fact. Man has slain Nature, the Mother that gave birth to him and devastated all the wonder and beauty of the world that was given to his charge. Now in his turn he is about to be slain by the swarm of living things he has himself in effect created!"

Blundering stupidly along his own path to self-perfection, man has left behind him tradition that is steeped in error. While he has exterminated the wild life of Europe and America, he has introduced pest after pest into Australia and New Zealand. There were no rabbits there until someone let loose a pair of them, and in no time they became a terrible pest. So they introduced the

weasel to eradicate the rabbit, and the weasel became a pest. So they brought in the cat to kill the weasel, and the cat became a pest. It has taken the strong arm of the government of New Zealand to prevent the bringing in of the snake, which so far is non-existent in the islands; just as it has taken all the vigilance of the American authorities to prevent people from bringing the Australian flying-fox, which is an overgrown bat, into the United States.

Tampering with nature always results in some epidemic. As man clears out the larger species, and turns to tilling the soil, he is beset by pests from the insect world. Given an adequate food supply, and any species will cover the world in no time. Australia and America furnish the best examples. In 1815, there was an epidemic of grasshoppers, such a one as is so vividly described by Rolvaag in "Giants in the Earth" occurring on our prairies. In 1827 there was a plague of mice, such as occurred recently in Australia and in California. In both places, the clearing of the land of other creatures and the garnering of vast stores of grain brought on the plague. Thousands of owls were shipped to the scene. A year ago the papers carried the following headlines which amused and surprised the world:

HUGE ARMY OF MICE MOVES LIKE CARPET ACROSS THE
LOWLANDS OF CALIFORNIA

No Pied Piper was found to enchant these swarming rodents from the district. Cats were terrified by them. Poison gas and fire alone checked their advance. Vultures and birds of prey arrived by the thousand from hundreds of miles away to gorge upon them, and it took four days of ceaseless labor, on the part of the army and state, to stamp them out. Millions of frogs in Texas, monkeys in Tibet, insects in hundreds and thousands of varieties costing man millions upon millions of dollars worth of toil and denial and disappointment, apart from plague and disease—this is only a fraction of the penalty man is paying for his war on animals. Yet he meets this question either by indifference, or by an ardent zeal

for sentimental prevention of cruelty that seldom more than touches the problem.

Man's slaughter of animals, domestic and wild, has gone on for centuries, yet the last decade has seen a greater harvest of furs than ever before. Back in 1583, Sir Humphrey Gilbert's amanuensis, enumerating the creatures to be found in America, wrote: "We could not observe the hundreth part of creatures in those uninhabited lands: but these mentioned may induce us to glorifie the magnificent God, who hath superabundantly replenished the earth with creatures serving for the use of man, though man hath not used a fifth part of the same, which the more doth aggravate the fault and foolish slouth in many of our nation, chusing rather to live indirectly, and very miserably to live and die within this realme pestered with inhabitants, then to adventure as becommeth men, to obtaine an habitation in those remote lands, in which Nature very prodigally doth minister unto men's endeavors, and for art to worke upon."

A quarter of a century after, Martin Pring estimated that "the Frenchmen brought from Canada the value of thirtie thousand Crownes in the year 1604. Almost in Beavers and Otters skinnnes only." Thirteen years after the arrival of the Mayflower, the Plymouth fathers were sending their traders and trappers further and further inland in pursuit of the retreating rodents. Three hundred years later, the head of the Hudson's Bay Company declared: "The inroads of civilization must inevitably drive the fur bearing animals from their present pastures. . . . Ultimately some of these animals must meet the fate of the buffalo."

Upon the fluctuations of the London market since England came into possession of Canada is written the tragedy of man's whimsicalities. The raccoon that could command no price at first, has risen to the premier place in man's sartorial affections. Muskrat has risen and fallen and risen and fallen through the century and nine million of them were offered on the sacrificial counter of trade in 1914, while 150,000,000 muskrats were sold at auction on the London markets from 1763 to 1900, and from 1900 to 1914, 58,000,000 more. Now observe. Furs occupy the

seventh place in the scale of import commodities in America to-day, and the twenty-fifth in both imports and exports. Between 1916 and 1925, the number of pelts handled in this country was: 132,292,087 muskrats, 70,383,378 skunk, and 6,284,390 raccoon, or a total of 210,000,000 of these little beasts alone went to adorn the ladies of the western world. The larger and more beautiful animals are no longer in the reckoning. A prominent fur firm advertised recently: "Where once there was a plethora of fine furs, there is now almost a dearth. The fur resources of the world have been so lavishly used that certain fur-bearing animals are almost extinct as for instance the Peruvian Chinchilla. The very finest quality of Russian Sable from the wooded sections of Siberia is extremely limited. With political changes in Russia, all raw fur prices came under the control of Soviet monopoly. A very few fur houses in the entire world—only the most exclusive and resourceful, can show wraps and coats ready-for-wear of Siberian Sable and Peruvian Chinchilla."

Thus creatures that have taken millions of years to evolve are snuffed out in the course of two or three voracious centuries. The nineteenth century saw the people of Tasmania become extinct; the twentieth may see not only the Polynesians and the Amerinds go, but many of the finest specimens of the animal kingdom. A continent that was given over to a few thousand red men and millions of fur-bearers has been preëmpted by a hundred million humans who may soon double their number. The shriek of the engine and the purr of the motor car have come to supplant the calls of the beast and the tread of the herd. And the wanton destruction may soon end for want of things to destroy.

It went on before the white man arrived. The Indian was no tenderhearted humanitarian. The safety of the pack lay only in the numerical weakness of the tribe. The Indian killed for the love of killing and for the flimsiest of appetites. Carcasses were carelessly thrust aside then as now, and even to-day the red men let out the dams of the beaver for no purpose. Yet to the presence of the Indian may be credited the presence of any wild life in this country to-day. Had he not blocked the way of the white man, the

European, with his guns and his traps, would have swept through the wilderness like a conflagration, and in a short time, all valuable life would have been exterminated.

But the gun is not the only weapon in his hand. Steel and steam, the plow and the saw, instruments of peace are likewise agencies for the destruction of mamalia. The reclamation of desert and swamp, the conversion of water into energy, the tampering with nature at every turn, clearing too many swamps and swamping too many clearings, making the desert to blossom—all this means driving the beaver from his dam and the buffalo from his prairie. And the result is that the economic conditions that make of the muskrat a treasure in Montana and Utah make him a pest in the states around them. Whereas thirty-four states find the skunk an asset, fourteen find him a liability. One region asks for but one thing—extinction; another cries for conservation. Man's needs are incompatible with nature. The beaver, damming up streams, holds back the floods for the benefit of the trees he fells; but the hardwood lumber interests wreak vengeance on him for his deeds. The trapper would exterminate everything that endangers his furs; the furrier would hunt all wild-fowl that threaten his pelts; the sportsman protests against the increasing protection of fur-bearers because they threaten the birds he wants to hunt. The skunk, whose evil reputation is due mainly to his propensity for chicken and his gossipy way of announcing his presence, is being exterminated; yet examination of his stomach contents shows him to be about fourteen times as valuable to the farmer as a consumer of vermin as he is evil as a consumer of chicken. And the humanitarian wishes to preserve all living things tenderly in spite of the fact that that is the road to the jungle and the law of club and fang.

Where in all this welter of confusion, of paradox, of incompatibility of feeling with need, of the laws of nature and the laws of man—where can be found order and justice and direction that is not merely movement but progress? The Humane Societies, warring on traps and trapping, cry out against the wearing of furs entirely, forget that an animal whose skin has no monetary value

to the farmer, is more likely to be treated brutally than one whose perfect fur brings a neat price. And the less valuable the fur, the less trapping, the more wild things turning pest will be about. Rapacious creatures whom farmers would regard as vermin would hardly be treated more humanely than those they tolerate for their pelts. It is in the nature of man to protect that which is worth something.

Animal husbandry is advanced as an alternative to trapping and hunting. This is nothing new. It was suggested three centuries ago by Captain John Smith and Father Le Jeune. Besides urging the domestication of the Elk, Le Jeune prophesied that "In time, parks can be made, in which to keep Beavers; these would be Treasure-Houses, besides furnishing us with fresh meat at all times." And to-day the fur-farming industry, in foxes, has taken hold of America, Japan, and England. But is that more humane? In England women are flocking to the fox farms to take their pick of pelts still on the backs of little creatures, and one breeding association sees "no reason why many women should not take to growing silver fox furs for themselves" pointing out that "It is even possible to tame the foxes, and they will become quite affectionate." I'd rather have my cat stolen and come back to me a fur of a different color than watch her grow into a muff.

But an even greater objection to farming is the confinement of wild creatures. This seems about as much an improvement on trapping as life-imprisonment is an improvement on capital punishment. Humane societies are right in objecting to zoos on the same grounds. Certainly no one who has visited the stockyards or escorted a herd of cattle overseas for slaughter can retain any great faith in fur-farms as humanitarian projects. Yet they are better than ruthless and cruel trapping.

A country so large as ours with such wide spaces available as great preserves and parks should not need to resort to such a cramped alternative. The Bureau of Biological Survey has in a similar way saved the seal from certain annihilation. It has turned the Pribilof Islands off Alaska into a seal preserve where in a perfectly natural environment under healthful and natural condi-

tions, the seal has been protected, and killing made possible only under the most scientific conditions. The seal is being brought round to survival. So should it be throughout our continent.

Killing under any circumstance is becoming more and more repugnant to man. The Hindus carried this feeling to a high degree. In sacrificing, the cut must be clean and quick, and the slightest slip of the knife lays the executioner open to the charge of murder. Yet deaths from snakes, and the torture and disease from insects that may not be killed, is a strange reversal of humane sympathies. In Buddhist Japan, kittens are thrown out to starve because no Buddhist will kill, and fishermen leave their catch on the shore so that they cannot be held responsible for any actual killing. Yet the suffering that Japanese impose upon their Eta who perform the functions of butchers, tanners, etc., is more inhuman than would be any such killing. The Maoris of New Zealand, having no animals left to kill, turned cannibal. As Bernard Shaw said, none of the sportsmen he has met are ferocious, while all the humanitarians he has met, are; and Count Keyserling points out that we are in danger of becoming a people whose "general compassion and good intentions would degenerate into the silliest prevention of cruelty to animals business."

America could never have been settled without some measure of extermination; nor can it remain settled without intelligent conservation. Who knows but that in the scheme of things, man's place in nature is to adjust the differences between species on the planet, to prevent the strong from ruthless individualism and the weak from vulgar dominance through numbers. "I hate to take life," said Beebe. "However, one can be tender-hearted without being sentimental, and if I need the facts for science, to complete the life-history of a whole species, I will shoot a dove on her eggs without compunction."

God, or Nature, left man in a sorry state of unpreparedness in his contest with winds and cold and hunger, and the lower forms of life came generously to his rescue. The discovery of the fur-fields of North America when Europe had an inadequate supply of other materials came as a god-send to many. Yet now

that man has a choice of all the fibers of earth, wool, silk, cotton, he is still unsatisfied. He is turning forests into fiber silk. But he has not enough at that. Somehow, man cannot live on the bare necessities alone. The dinosaur passed out because he could not find time in which to eat enough to keep himself alive. Is man, now that he has consumed the forests and the things within, likewise doomed to extinction because he cannot find time to satisfy his ever growing appetites. Or is he going to find upon a higher plane of personal power a life secure without animals, without insects, and without disease and voracious hungers—without the need of furs for his body and flesh for his bowels. To be logical, humanitarians should encourage ruthless hunting the sooner to bring about the end of wild life, for even were it conceivable that the entire world suddenly recoiled from the wearing of furs and the eating of meat, the human side of the problem would not be solved. The reproductive powers of man and beast are destructive of one another.

CHAPTER XX

Bestiaries and Nature Fakers

THUS, after nearly ten centuries of European evolution accompanied by the annihilation of many beasts in the whole world, we might pause to inquire what intellectual, literary, moral or religious effect has this pursuit of animal life had on man.

His attitude to the world of beasts is the measure of a man. To scorn a fellow he calls him beast, thereby putting the human below the animal. To exalt and display humanity, he shows his kindness to the dumb world. To practice piety he retires to a cave and fraternizes with its denizens. To be brave, he hunts; to be civilized, he exterminates the jungle; to be domestic, he rears pets as playmates for his children. And when he wants to philosophize, he writes fables, imagining himself a beast, symbolizing his virtues and caricaturing his vices in attributes, manners, and costumes that reveal his unconscious attitudes to life.

Man may not have climbed up in the animal world, but in his thoughts and appetites he only too often slips down in it. Puzzled by it, terrified and lured by it, he sees in it all the joyous freedom from conscience and the bitter absence of spirit. And in his effort to flee from it, he writes his Bible; in his effort to justify it, he writes his fables and his beast epics.

The animal story is one of the oldest stories in the world. Literature and art virtually began through man's puzzlement over his relation to the beasts about him. Every primitive race sought to bridge the gap between spirit and matter through the worship of animals. The snake, the dragon, the golden calf, the beaver—in fear, in prayer, in prowess and in orgy, man has given voice to his horror of his kinship with the crawling world. He has compromised with it, he has flagellated it, he has eaten it and has imposed terrible taboos on eating it. Struggling upward out of a

world of misconceptions and intuitive sympathies, the Indo-European races emerged in the Middle Ages with one single beast story—"Reynard the Fox"—which became a highly sophisticated literary product, and has remained the pabulum of youth for centuries. "Panchatantra" from India, Æsop from Greece, the Bestiaries of medieval Europe, and the Brer Rabbit stories of America form a chain of literary evolution and spiritual ambivalence, through the ages. For a thousand years, literary Europe was enamored of sermons based upon the specialized characteristics of the animal world. The bestiaries "were read or recited from the Bosphorus to Iceland; they were quoted by popes, and repeated by friars; they were taught in the Universities and schools, were copied in the cloisters, were recited by the fire-sides, and were rendered visible to the faithful by carvings in choir or chancel. . . . They are, rather, divine emblems in which the supposed habits and peculiarities of animals are exhibited as the types of Christian mysteries. Nature is the veil which in these stories is drawn aside to disclose the divine realities behind."

In order to elevate man, the ecclesiast of the Middle Ages did not hesitate to falsify both God and Nature. Knowing little of natural history, but eager to dispose of his allegories, he conceived a parable and proceeded to manufacture an animal or the habits of an animal to illustrate it. He seemed to have little fear that someone might challenge it by saying that such is not the nature nor the habits of the beast. Through fifty different animals, Physiologus of the bestiaries, sought to spur the material man to things godly as illustrated by the description of the beaver:

There is a beast called the Beaver, who is very gentle and quiet; but his organs of reproduction are very useful to him in the protection of his body; for, when he is pursued by the hunter and is about to be captured, he bites them off and casts them back to the hunter; and after wards when the beaver encounters any other hunter he throws himself on his back, and, when the hunter perceives that he is mutilated, he leaves him alone.

So do thou, oh man! give back to the hunter, the Devil, that which belongs to him, such as unchastity, adultery, greediness. Cut away all such and give them to the Devil and he will let thee go, and thou shalt say: "My soul is as a bird escaped from the net of the fowler."

The centuries that followed till the creation of the "Beast Epic" known as Reynard the Fox saw an improvement in moral understanding as well as a somewhat better acquaintanceship with the world of furry creatures. The monastic life which was an escape from social illusions was itself becoming irksome to many, and struggles between those who wanted more rigorous discipline and those who preferred the laxities of their retreat resulted in the imprisonment and escape and recapture of a highly-born monk who became the author of the first of the beast epics. During his escape he had reached the mountains of the Vosges, and found in his augmented zoölogical range the inspiration for his poem which he later wrote in expiation of his sins.

In the story of "Reynard the Fox" we find wild animals hunting in the larders of man more than man in the jungles of the beasts, and the beasts simulate the manners of men, their courtliness, their piety, their government, and their dress. One begins to detect a subtle sympathy for the beast, almost, it might be said, a satisfaction in the wits to which he resorts to best his inferiors. The Christian concept of fellowship with all earthly suffering beings is descending in the scale of living things, and impatience with stupidity and ignorance is sharpening men's morals. The time is soon to come when hermit or monk will demonstrate his humanity by real love of animals, and thereby his moral lessons, instead of merely by nature-faking and picayune parables. Otters warming the feet of St. Cuthbert as he stands in the surf all night doing penance may be but a wish-fulfillment for the spiritualization of the beast, but it is an admission of his possibilities as well. The conversion of Bracchio to the views of St. Æmilianus, similarly denotes the latent tenderness in the harshest of men. St. Æmilianus, a hermit in his hut, heard the clang of the hunters in pursuit of a boar. The boar rushed into the hut and remained at bay, while the hermit saint discoursed upon the follies and the foibles of life with the irate German hunter. But the dart had penetrated the heart of Bracchio, and when the lord for whom he served died and left him free to do as he wished, Bracchio assumed the monastic responsibilities of the saint. At another time,

King Childebert was in mad pursuit of a wild bull, who likewise took shelter behind the gentleness of St. Carileffus, and both beasts and king succumbed to the tender persuasions of the saint.

It had taken Europe these thousand years to adjust its tendencies so that growth away from the primitive, the savage and the bestial meant bringing all living things within the folds of human tenderness. It had been perceived by the Greeks as an inescapable axiom that civilization without the softening influences of love of nature could not long endure. In the "Bacchæ" by Euripides there is implied the idea that the over-urban life of the Greeks must be revitalized by the wilder and freer spirit which comes from contact with the wilderness and with wild life. Some such idea seems to have haunted thinking people during the Roman period, and the same revolt against the sophisticated, suburban culture of the ancient world partly explains the universal migration of cultivated Romans, at one period, into Christian communities in desert and wilderness as described by Montelambert. Some of the early saints went to the extreme in endeavoring to establish brotherhood with the beast, St. Francis preaching to the birds and St. Anthony to the fishes. The premature urbanization of the Mediterranean lands seems to have had a depressing effect on men. One grows miserable as one thinks, happy as one plays in the wilds. There is indeed some source of strength in the mere contact with wild life, from which the civilized man feels cut off as a plant from its roots.

Ruskin in his "Modern Painters" points up this observation by indirection. The modern, he notes with surprise, is interested in nature for its own sake as was never the case with the artists of old. "And the more he considered the subject, the more he would feel the peculiarity; and, as he thought over the art of the Greeks and Romans, he would still repeat, with increasing certainty of conviction: 'Mountains! I remember none.' The Greeks did not seem, as artists, to know that such things were in the world. They carved, or variously represented, men, and horses, and beasts, and birds, and all kinds of living creatures,—yes, even down to cuttle-fish; and trees, in a sort of way; but

not so much as the outline of a mountain; and as for lakes, they merely showed they knew the difference between fresh and salt water by the fish they put into each." Still, rarely in their art, was any sign of kinship or fellow-feeling with the brute world. Their attitude was largely objective.

It was with this inheritance from Christian and pagan attitudes, mixed and confused with barbarous northern European cruelties that Renaissance Europe turned toward the west. Columbus had to overcome not only the fear of the unknown seas, but the fear of the imaginary beasts and monsters it contained. These were no vagaries of the sailors he recruited. If they believed in them in the calm faith of their religion, while ensconced within their village walls, how much more real did they not become in the face of hazard and ocean gale! Europeans were prepared for anything in the new world, even after the terrors of the sea were dispelled.

Returning from the discovery of the St. Lawrence, Cartier reported having seen a one-legged Indian. Sir Humphrey Gilbert, an Oxford man at that, saw a sea-lion for the first time, and was so amazed that "He tooke it for Bonum Omen, rejoycing that he was to warre against such an enemy, if it were the devill" though he unfortunately "forebeare to deliver" the opinions held of the beast. Richard Whitebourne in 1622 saw a strange creature which he took for either a mermaid or a merman. In 1688, Thomas Glover met with an apparition in Virginia waters, of which he renders a full description: "And now it comes into my mind, I shall here insert an account of a very strange Fish or rather a Monster, which I happened to see in Rapa-hannock River about a year before I came out of the Country: the manner of it was thus. As I was coming down the forementioned River in a sloop bound for the Bay, it happened to prove calm: at which time we were three leagues short of the rivers mouth; the tide of ebb being then done, the sloop-man dropped his grap-line, and he and his boy took a little boat belonging to the sloop, in which they went ashore for water, leaving me aboard alone in which time I took a small book out of my pocket and sate down at the stern of the vessel to read; but I had not read long before I heard a great

rushing and flashing of the water, which caused me suddenly to look up, and about half a stone's cast from me appeared a most prodigious Creature, much resembling a man, only somewhat larger standing right up in the water with his head, neck, shoulders, breast and waste, to the cubits of his arms above water; his skin was tawny, much like that of an Indian: the figure of his head was pyramidal, slick, without hair; his eyes large and black, and so were his eyebrows; his mouth very wide, with a broad, black, streak on the upper lip, which turned upwards at each end like mustacheos: his countenance was grim and terrible; his neck, shoulders, arms, breast and waste, were like unto the neck, arms, shoulders, breast and waste of a man; his hands, if he had any, were under water; he seemed to stand with his eyes fixed on me for sometime, and afterward he dived down, and a little after riseth at somewhat a farther distance, and turned his head toward me again, and then immediately falleth a little under water, and swimmeth away so near the top of the water that I could discern him throw out his arms, and gather them in as a man doth when he swimmeth. At last he shoots with his head downwards, by which means he cast his tayl above the water, which exactly resembled the tayl of a fish with a broad fane at the end of it."

Fifty years later, the *Boston Gazette* reported the presence of a catamount in town, a creature well-calculated to put the Physiologus into the realm of the fabulous and impossible. Said the *Gazette*: "To be seen at the Greay Hound Tavern in Roxbury, a Wild Creature, which was caught in the Woods about 80 miles to the westward of this Town, called a Cattamount, it has a Tail like a Lyon, its Leggs are like a Bears, its Claws like an Eagle, its Eyes like a Tyger, its Countenance is a mixture of every Thing that is Fierce and Savage, he is exceedingly Ravenous and devours all sorts of Creatures that he can come near; its Agility is surprising, it will Leap 30 Foot at one jump, notwithstanding it is but three Months old. Whoever inclines to see this Creature may come to the Place aforesaid, paying a Shilling each, shall be welcome for their Money."

The hangover from pre-Columbian days was not easily dis-

pelled. As late as 1800, Dana and Cuyler were reported to have seen "a strange fish, with two fore-feet or paws, goggling eyes! a young mermaid perhaps!—or an imp escaped from hell." More vivid and more terrifying yet was the vision seen twenty miles from Niagara, described by Maude, the English traveler. "A boat that had sailed from York," he assures us, "unexpectedly returned again; the people on board relating, with great terror, their having seen a great Snake, at least thirty feet long, which, from its rearing its head and fore-part of its body out of the water, they conjectured meant to attack them! All this they disposed on oath before a Magistrate. The Indian present, who have always a corroborating story ready (for instance, the Mamoth Bull), asserted that their people had seen three such Snakes, and had killed two!"

It seems at once surprising and yet natural that the newcomers to America should see hallucinations while scorning the superstitions of the Indians. The vast unexplored continent, with its cyclones and engulfing floods, the varied climate and unchanging prairies—in such a strange world it was but natural that dormant superstitious memories should come back with terror compounded and awakened imaginative realism. But one thing prevented the European from reverting to myth-making in the new world—his weapon and the Indians. For nothing is so reassuring to folly as a greater fallacy. The sophisticated European looked upon the tantrums of the medicine man and saw through his ill-concealed magic at a glance, while his weapons always tested well against the denizens of the wilderness. The result was a tendency to caricature and ridicule which had become the rationalistic attribute of the modern American. Against a more civilized world of humane faiths, Kipling developed the traditional beast epic in a series of animal stories that combine the deep color of India with the mockery of science. But the American tendency is more toward the sentimental preachiness of the bestiary, or the challenging caricature and ridicule of "Krazy Kat" and Don Marquis's "Archy—the Cockroach." The nature-faker is given short shrift, though our addiction to and fondness for the "Tall story" is but

a vicarious indulgence in the same thing, as the following editorial from the *New York Sun* will indicate.

BEAVER AND MUSKRAT

Fur is flying among the naturalists. Chase Osborn was quoted in the *Century* magazine as saying that beavers enslaved muskrats, almost every beaver lodge having "from two to half a dozen or more muskrat slaves who do the dirty work." Director Hornaday of the Bronx Zoo denounces the notion as "fantastic and beyond all belief."

We have heard many strange tales about the beaver. There was the story that one of the tribe stole some blueprints from Camp Chappagat of the Boy Scouts and was seen consulting them while making his dam in Bear Mountain Park. And there was a beaver in Pike county, Pennsylvania, which worked so fast that his teeth could be heard growing. But such reports do not justify the charge of slavery.

A middle ground of explanation is discovered in "Efficiency Experts I Have Trapped," by George X. Decker (Out of print.). Mr. Decker saw muskrats associating with beavers near his plantation at Tri States and spent ten days watching them from a tree, coming down only when the tree was felled by beavers. He declares that the muskrats worked for the beavers, but not under compulsion. The beavers, who toil only at night, hired the muskrats for the day shift, rewarding their little friends by advising them how to escape traps. The beaver, having become almost extinct through the American desire to put his skin into a hat, sought to save his cousin the muskrat from disappearing into Hudson seal. In cases where the muskrats would not accept the self-help lectures they were paid off by the beavers with neatly tied bundles of water lily root.

We trust that Mr. Decker's explanation will save ex-Governor Osborn from further suspicion of nature faking and soothe the indignation of Dr. Hornaday."

The European, reared in the imaginative fears of a continent bereft of animal life, found, upon his arrival on the American scene, that reality denied myth. But the African negro who came to America brought with him memories of animal stories and some gentle superstitions such as are at the basis of all beast epics. Mixing the skeptical literariness of the French and Spanish in and about New Orleans with the imaginative richness of the mulatto nurses, two literary strains were combined in the stories they told the children. It was these stories that Joel Chandler Harris collected and worked over in the Brer Rabbit stories, perhaps the

truest type of beast epic yet known, or possibly ever to be known to America.

Apart from these, and from a few highly over-romanticized dime novels, the beast epic has not manifested itself in the new world. Superseding it is the more intellectual dog story, typified by Jack London's "The Call of the Wild" or the lesser yarns of Oliver Curwood and Payson Terhune. The American is too matter-of-fact to be more than a private hunter—even the chase is not much in his line;—and too much of a democrat to waste his intellectual substance on animals. His epic will be the epic of the trapper or of Paul Bunyan.

CHAPTER XXI

Silk Hats and Tall Stories

"Nor all a lie, nor all true, nor all fable, nor all known, so much have the story-tellers told, and the fablers fabled, in order to embellish their tales, that they have made all seem fable."

—WACE, on King Arthur.

PAUL BUNYAN ranged all day from Oregon to the Turtle River Country in Minnesota and snared only three deer and two small bears for the immortal meal he was giving to his good bullies. And this was in the land of Wishpoosh, the Beaver, whose struggles with Speelyei, the Coyote god, had caused the waters of the northern lakes to be diverted into the valley of the Columbia. The beaver has been conquered, and the trap turns rusty from disuse. The trapper and the frontiersman give way to the lumberjack and the home-builder, and the fireside conjures up myths for the children.

The Chinese and the Russians have their dragons; the Celts, their magical white hart who lures hunters and wandering princes to forgetfulness of earth; the French their were-wolf. America has no such terrifying beast image; her epic beast is the meek little rabbit, that prolific rodent with the enormous watch and no time to waste. For the American knight-errant went contending not against his equals and his own kind, but a race with whom he had no filial relationships, a race of a different morning, the vanquishment of which could not possibly be laid to magic nor the machinations of enchantments. And while superstition was not lacking and the belief in giants, mystical powers and luck guided the courage and the feet of white men no less than red, still the obvious ogre was a human being, and the beast in human guise appeared more often than the human in the guise of the beast.

The result is that the American imagination, democratic at

base in the sense that it concerns itself with people in common walks of life rather than with potentates, has so far envisaged a type-personality free from princely trappings, elemental, down-right, self-reliant and contemptuous of patronage. The American hero has cleared a whole continent of wild beasts, has mastered the ways of a savage race more fearful than dragons, whose women are more furious than the furies—but he returns to the civilization from which he comes, not as a conquering hero learned in the arts of magic or demanding the President's daughter, but simply as an unlettered, weatherbeaten, trapper who tosses his hard-earned cash into the lap of luxury and hurries back again to his lonely plains. The American hero has renounced civilization twice over. He has left the platitudes of European culture behind the seas, and he has scorned the fawning imitations of European culture behind the Alleghanies. In other words, the American hero has gone David Thoreau one better—he has drowned philosophy in the great silences of an expectant world. And he would have felt about as comfortable in the rhetorical raiment of Empire Builder with which he is latterly being gowned as any hobo in a dress suit.

The American hero fights no strange monsters, achieves no triumphs over the mysterious forces of nature. He faces life squarely, and only rarely keeps a note-book. He seeks no princess for wife, but knows how to love an Indian maiden faithfully in a land where faithfulness is no great virtue. Pathfinder and empire builder the fur-hunter—that prototype of the American hero—inadvertently became, but had he visualized himself as such, had he stopped to imagine the magnitude of his ultimate achievements, he would have been confused and frustrated. Had not John Ledyard seen himself too much as the grandiose American discoverer, he would not have offered himself so liberally to European nobility and would most likely have become one of the best known American characters.

It is significant of the American hero that he is no conqueror of heroes. King Arthur wages constant war upon the petty kings and chieftains of his time and rules over them. The trapper-hero

of America never concerns himself much with his rivals in heroism. He slays a bully in cold blood, but he seeks no dominion over his tribe. There are perhaps but a dozen outstanding men of the trapper days, and no two of these would receive like recognition from the American world. Of at least half a dozen has it been said that this one, that one, or the other one was the greatest character, the finest guide, the most knowing geographer. Yet, while jealousy among them was current, each has yielded to the other graciously his due for prowess, and followed another's guideship to the point of death without aspersions or blame. He does not seek to coerce another to his course; having established his reputation as a trapper and a trusty guide, he gathers round him fifty faithful fellows, and the world's their own. What General Gode said of James Bridger, Trapper, Frontiersman, Scout, and Guide, has been said and might well be said of all the rest—Kit Carson, John Colter, Jedediah Smith, Bill Williams, or David Thompson.

"Bridger's claims to remembrance rest upon the extraordinary part he bore in the explorations of the West. As a guide he was without an equal, and this is the testimony of everyone who ever employed him. He was a born topographer; the whole west was mapped out in his mind, and such was his instinctive sense of locality and direction that it used to be said of him that he could smell his way where he could not see it. He was a complete master of plains and woodcraft, equal to any emergency and full of resources to overcome every obstacle. While Bridger was not an educated man, any country that he had ever seen he could fully and intelligently describe, and he could make a very correct estimate of the country surrounding it. He could make a map of any country he had ever traveled over, marking out its streams and mountains and the obstacles in it correctly, so that there was no trouble in following it and fully understanding it. So remarkable a man should not be lost to history and the country and his work allowed to be forgotten."

Yet, the denominator common to them all merely emphasized their remarkable individuality. Loneliness and courage evoked

from each man his special aptitudes for life. In all the romances of the west, courage is the dominant note. We have feeling, prowess, tenderness to the suffering and revengeful sympathy—but courage and loneliness, or courage in loneliness, colors them all. There is no general scheme of social loyalty, no political conscience or motive. It is an unfinished world—there it lies, not to be philosophized over, but to be shaped, to be touched by knowledge and awakened to usefulness.

Down to the end of the eighteenth century, all that was known of the far western world came in orally through the channels of these men. It was their world, and civilization was willing to take its adventures vicariously and in romantic doses. The private struggles of rival fur companies over the fur-fields and the friendship of the Indians had broadened into international edging for the possession of the continent by the great governments of the world. Spain lay snug within her domains west of the Mississippi, basking in the sun of California and New Mexico; America was struggling with Great Britain for the vast terrain between Detroit and Oregon. Apart from the report of Lewis and Clark, little or nothing was known of the west that was not mere hearsay. Forty years were to crumble into eternity before the creative forces of nationality burgeoned in these wastes unto the region where rolls the mighty Oregon.

But these forty years reached eighty years before and aft. When the colonies burst into rebellion, there was born in Virginia the young man who was to be most helpful in leading Meriwether Lewis over the Rockies to the Pacific. John Colter was only about twenty or twenty-five years old when he joined the Lewis and Clark Expedition, but so inured was he to the plains that when his three years' trek with them was drawing to a close, he dropped off on the way to pick up the trail again for beaver. Seven years he spent far from what passed for civilization, seven years in which he roamed like a thing of the wild himself in pursuit of game. That he made no effort to return amongst men is easily understood. What arts that he learned could earn him bread among haberdashers? Where he negotiated with chiefs, he would

be thrown among stevedores. Against the gaudy glitter of a frontier fandango he posed the awe-inspiring spectacle of the Yellowstone. Colter had come upon the Yellowstone region in one of his many lonely meanderings. For half a century the warnings of the Indians of a region inhabited by evil spirits had sent rumors of volcanoes, earthquakes, geysers, brimstone and yawning chasms tending only to arouse curiosity, suspicion and dread among the fur-hunting fraternity. And when at last Colter arrived with the information that he had actually found the place, he was laughed down as an excellent teller of tall stories. And Colter only retired into himself as he had carried his self deeper into the solitudes.

Among all the tribes of Amerind none was more hated and feared than the Blackfeet. Into the country of the Blackfeet, however, Colter and every other trapper pressed, for it was one of the best beaver countries in the northwest. In the art of evading their savagery he had had ample practice. Then came the day when all that he had learned in the wilderness was called upon to save him from their torments. He was coming up the Jefferson River with his pal named Potts, when suddenly he heard the tread of what seemed like a buffalo herd, but which turned out to be a mob of eight hundred Blackfeet. Between the time of their discovery and Colter's capture was but a moment, and they stripped him naked. Realizing the utter futility of resistance, he tried to get Potts to come with him, but the latter only answered the Indian demand with a bullet in reply to the bullet sent after him. And two men were dead. Colter was now left alone, naked and disarmed, in the midst of the warriors who clamored for his scalp. But either to test the white man's mettle or to give their young warriors the practice huntsmen give their hounds, they told him to run for his life. Feigning inability to run, he lagged till he had gone a hundred yards, and saw that the young savages were stripping as for a sprint. With his own life as his reward, Colter sent the old earth whirling on its axis away from him. Five miles of unbroken prairie, the Madison Fork, ahead: behind, frantic, whooping demons, untamed. Yet after all, they were no

more than men, and Colter was familiar with the limits and the possibilities of human prowess. The blood was spurting from his nose, and his bare feet felt the lashing of his speed. He dared not turn lest he lose a moment, but he had come to the point where he seemed to have no lust left for life. He looked back to see that he had far outstripped them. Need we pause to wonder what he thought? He had no time for thinking. One eager savage, hoping for the plaudits of his kind, risking his life for the prize of primitive glory, was not far behind. Colter stopped. Mercy was not in the bargain. The Indian found himself as suddenly victim as victor, his own broken spear in his own tormented flesh, and Colter, with the Crow's blanket as spoils, and the entire infuriated tribe of Indians in hot pursuit, finished the rest of the distance to the stream. It is said that he hid himself in a beaver house, and that the Indians stood over his very head, and hovered about the place for two hours. However, after dark, Colter struck out for the mountains, snow-capped and inhospitable, and for eleven days he followed his unerring instincts, till, haggard, tortured, well-nigh famished, he reached Fort Manuel, three hundred miles from that living purgatory.

It was in that very year (1809), that another famous trapper-guide plunged for his life into a none-too-friendly world. Kit Carson ran away from backwoods culture with the instinct of the honest man for the real thing and a distaste for sham. Among the simple trappers and the richly savage Indians he found vigor, passion, honorable treachery and the essence of democracy, and a chance to win his spurs without the loss of his self-respect. For throughout the life of this uncouth huntsman there was no yea for nay, a directness of purpose in little things that in crucial things was symbolized by a perfect shot. The outstanding thing about Kit Carson's personal life is that he married and loved his Indian girls with the same sweet devotion that he married and loved Josefa. He shot and killed Shunar, the Frenchman, with the same distaste for murder that went with the shooting and the killing of the most ferocious savage. And his contempt for breach of promise which General Kearny imposed upon him left him only

the more loyal to Fremont in whom he found an equal and a friend.

What is significant in the life of this famous trapper is that in most of the fundamentals he had no philosophy or learning, but instinct, as a guide. He drank from the fresh springs of experience, not from the tappet; and while it is the fashion for romantic writers to reproduce his quaint dialect as an earnest of his backwoodsiness, they forget that he spoke French, Spanish, several Indian tongues and the sign-language besides, and that few white-collared factory hands to-day can employ their God-given faculties in as many directions as did untutored Kit Carson.

Now this is not a eulogy of Kit Carson. He had faults, of course, but a Sequoia would manifest faults too if it were standing on Pine Street, New York. Kit Carson was used to beaver hats and averse to silk hats because silk hats robbed him of his bread and butter. But when the silk-hatted gentry in the east wanted room for their children to play or sleep in out west, they were glad that Kit Carson was there to lead them overland. And there was one sure thing about Kit Carson—though he himself believed in giants and monsters, he didn't believe in ogres, and didn't want to become one. In all his fights, women and children—Indian or white—were never his targets.

There was no chance for knight errantry on the plains. Few white women ever went so far in those days. Yet some of the deeds which made the knights of old famous and beloved, Carson also had to his credit. Rescuing some rich merchants from the hands of white desperados, pursuing Indians who had captured a white woman, a few of these things fell to his lot in the course of the day's labor. But as such heroics played little part in the American scene, Kit Carson's place in the folk-lore of America must rest upon other virtues.

In the two hundred years of sojourn in the American wilderness, a vast pageant of human character performed its diversified parts. Jesuits, with their hearts in heaven and their eyes on God; Puritans with their downright realization that God had given them a crude world to refine; idealists with their abhorrence



Fort Union in 1833. From Maximilian's Travels

of Pharisees and their love of natural artlessness; murderers, convicts, blinded by lust and desire to right and justice; romanticists with their astigmatic over-idealization of the natural man; fanatics with their warped visions; land-grabbers with their mouths full of empire and gold-hunters with their dreams of idleness—all these penetrated the continent and sought to give his particular mold to the type that was to be. And out of this composite mêlée, a few worthy thinkers had to fashion a new state and a new nation. But before that was possible, there had to become fixed in the minds of this heterogeneous mass some type, some ideal, some prototype, some symbol or some mold to pattern after. And foremost among them all was the Kit Carson, John Colter, James Bridger, Daniel Boone, Jedediah Smith, Franchere, Bonneville, Fremont personality, and from these emerged the American hero, the Alastor of the new world—Leatherstocking.

Leatherstocking, brought before the pseudo representative of law and order, Judge Marmaduke Temple, for killing a deer, gives voice to the newer conception of right and freedom. He talks to the judge in no cringing tones. Pleading for his freedom, he virtually commands it. The land is his, and poaching, from the curse of which he had escaped to America centuries before, is going to hold no fears over his gray head. It was he who cleared the land of beasts, it was he who won the earth to civilization and made the judgeship possible, and it was he whose earth by right it ought to be. And all he asks is for the freedom of the forests that he might again lay treasure in the lap of luxury—buy himself free from the clutches of civilization.

Let us shift the scene for a moment. Napoleon is returning from Moscow. "In the middle walks a little man, wearing a Polish fur coat and a cap of red fox, and helping himself with a birchen staff. Thus in silence he wends his way through Russia." Years later, the conqueror in civilization has met his Waterloo. He is on the Island of St. Helena. He does not dream of new worlds to conquer. He merely reflects regretfully, that he had not escaped to America, puzzled with fate. "If I had had a fit of the blues, I should have mounted a horse, ridden hundreds of

miles, enjoyed travel with the ease of a private individual, lost amid the crowd."

Ah! Leatherstocking! The dream of every man is, was and ever will be your dream, and your life will for ever be the supreme symbol of man's waywardness and his faithfulness in a world of chaotic, paradoxical and mutually destructive laws.

What has happened to the trapper type in American life? The cowboy? He is only a stupid caricature in which none of the pure traits of the free man may be found. Into what then has his spirit gone? What transmigration has he come to? In Europe, knighthood lifted him and his simple adventures into nobility, but in America democracy has given him no quarter. It seems that he has cropped up in the new industrial world on an altogether different scene. Something in the I.W.W. type is strangely redolent of that vanished personality, and Paul Bunyan, the lumberjack, is his best pal.

IN PROSPECT

MY book is done. About to put it from my mind, I ask myself: Such was our past, but what of the present and the future? America is running the fire of world criticism. "The Babbitt Warren" is a cheap version of the fine satire one of our own hurled round the world. The vulgar lineaments seen in us, our incongruities and sturdy provincialism—these are the present which has swamped the colorful legend of conquest and adventure which was our past.

As one looks back upon this world pageant, one sees that America seldom fell down when she was herself, but only when she tried to be what she cast off when her people left Europe behind. The America that was true to herself was the America that gave Rousseau, Chateaubriand, Shelley, Blake and Wordsworth their dreams. But these dreams have been our literary undoing. Cramped in the thought and manners of the Europe of before the French Revolution these writers gave vogue to a mixed breed of sentimental characters that were the offspring of the savage and the natural man. And Americans, prone to accept old-world intellectualism as superior, swallowed the jargon, style and motive, of the "Renaissance of Wonder." Wordsworth invested Ruth's lover with sentimental fantasies. . . .

"How pleasant," then he said, "it were
A fisher or a hunter there,
In sunshine or in shade
To wander with an easy mind;
And build a household fire, and find
A home in every glade!"

And Americans, caught in the snare of these exotic visions, at once abandoned their own better instincts and flung judgment born of bitter experience to the winds in the pursuit of similar blandishments. The static bliss exemplified by Wordsworth was

all right for the green turf of England, but had no kinship with the hard, unceasing labor of trapping. Still, the vogue set in and the whole range of American literature, seeking to give life and permanence to that unique experience—the conquest of the wilderness—was patterned after this pother.

Let Ruth sleep beneath her “greenwood tree!” What has this innocent rusticity to do with men who, pursuing their humble tasks, added an inland empire to our vast domains? They carried on their backs their peltries and even their canoes, over those immense reaches which are now covered by luxurious coaches drawn by oil-burning steam engines. But the transcontinental trains follow the very path they trod, though the tracks are now made clear and kept safe by thousands, obeying the swift, transforming impulse of a land that is full of wide, undimensional spaces. Throughout these regions, without walls, without fences, men had moved naked in the eyes of God; and to this day, the lack of walls and fences disconcerts the European. As one moves across these prairie stretches, one still feels as if at the center of existence, in a zone of neutrality between movement and progress, where the future and the past are one.

Here was one of the most vital experiences ever afforded conscious, civilized man. Europe had fought its battles with the wilderness when its racial consciousness was, from the literary point of view, dormant. Its *Beowulf*, its sagas, its Bible, its art and ethics, were the direct result of the impact of primitive mind on primitive experience. Europe wrote or told what it felt at the time without thought of critics or absolute standards. But when the same impact of man and nature occurred in America, raw life and knowledge faced each other and the Euro-American became self-conscious. He began to dress up his feelings in prudery, virtue, good language, sentimentalism—and lost truth. Except for a pitifully few courageous souls, the vast outpouring of literature of the first two centuries was pother of the most pathetic sort. But the critics gave support only to those who on the American scene, with the American background, painted in a life-sized portrait of the European mind.

There was that in America that negated all static emotion. The contemplative outlook on life was bound to give way before the hard, factual, rational point of view of puritan, scientist and trapper. Our love of nature was not a submission to it, not a seeking of blessed vacuums wherein to repose in peace. Our sense of economy gave no room for thrift. Life was full and must be spent to be saved. That was the spirit of the trapper.

America is the product of the mobile hosts from all lands who gave color to its character and determined its present social and political make-up. I had set out to limit myself to a study of the hunters and fishers of America, but I discovered before very long that this could not be done without tapping the history of nearly every race on earth. This common impulsion of mankind gives the lie to special histories. It inverts the process of our development. It makes all American histories begin with England, instead of with France and Spain; and with building on the land instead of with hunting and fishing in it.

Disregarding chronology in history as the airship disregards boundary lines, one finds history only current affairs. In history one should seek to draw out of life that gush, that stream of interest that is hidden in the past as an artesian well is hidden in the depths. To write a history of America, of England, of France, is fundamentally to falsify history. The inter-reaction of causes and effects must be studied in the light of different peoples, not merely in chronological and provincial parcelings. We should move from nation to nation and come home to our own experience as though we had only a week's vacation.

The ever freshening process of life swept hither and yon with the currents of continental American libido, and confounded and confused the old-world philosophers. With so many alert, intelligent humans thrown against the uncouth forces of nature and of savagery, the result could not but be of greater import and of wider influence than the influence of Rome on Europe. What more natural then that the character of America, its speed and motion, should be a projection of the nomadic life of the hunter and the trapper rather than the static ideals of the pioneer-settler. In

Europe people lived confined in villages, within great stone walls and under the shadow of fortresses. Europeans had no need of motion. But when they plunged into this continent, with its year-long portages, with its thousands of miles of untrampled prairie, they must have sworn an unconscious oath that they would find some means of easy transport which would carry them with less travail;—and the railroads, steamships, motor-cars and airplanes were born. The *coureur de bois* has become the *coureur de monde*, the typical American. Here was the substance out of which the nation's mind and culture was made, and "Rotary" is the American Round Table.

"The explanation that the physical conquest of the continent has first to be complete is an inversion," says John Dewey. "To settle a continent is to put it in order, and this is a work which comes after, not before, great intelligence and great art. . . . It means nothing less than the discovery and application of a method of subduing and settling nature in the interests of a democracy. . . . Hence the puny irrelevancy that measures our strivings with yardsticks handed down from class cultures of the past. . . . The beginning of culture would be to cease plaintive eulogies of a past culture, eulogies which carry only a few yards before they are drowned in the noise of the day, and essay an imaginative insight into the possibilities of what is going on assuredly although so blindly and crudely."

Many Americans, misled by a vague nostalgia, have wandered back to Europe in search of icons. It is not without significance that a biography of a unique American character recently published—"The Road to the Temple" by Susan Glaspell—opens with this sentence: "This is the romance of an American brought up on the Mississippi and buried beside the Temple of Apollo at Delphi." The instincts of George Cram Cook were right, but he lost himself by walking with his head turned backward, and landed in Greece. He should have either remained on the Mississippi, or faced westward. But he was smothered by Harvard. Misled by the culture of a people that lived where there were no Mississippis, he hungered for another age. It is common among

us that wine-bibbers in Delphi seem more interesting than bootleggers in Davenport.

True that Greek art was great. But have we not put as much beauty into our motor-cars? And that art is the offspring of our restlessness. We are a people of many rivers, but our restlessness is due to eagerness for life, not an escape from it. Instead of studying so much the influence of Europe on America it would be more to the point and more illuminating to study the influence of America on Europe. When we put our emotions and interests in order and differentiate between the effects of cultural history on us and our own geography upon us, then we will begin to utilize in our art the dynamic impulses latent in the new world, and come into our own.

The mirror into which Americans ought to look is the mirror of its waterways. We enter our continent at its river mouths and traverse it along its river banks. We satisfy our nomadic natures by taking in Washington, D. C., on our way to Chicago. We are by nature, rovers, and even as city-dwellers we course in and out of the country with a love for sheer movement that astonishes Europeans. To vast numbers of people, fishing, hunting, and hiking are dearer than fame and fortune. Europeans are disturbed by this restlessness until they go west and get caught by the contagion of motion. Our long rivers and our life of constant change takes hold of the more spirited foreigners and loosens up the hard lumps of inaction which tradition ossified in their beings, and they delight in it. But many drop like stones into the pools of our cities and there remain. They become critics and editorial readers in publishing houses who, while publishing rivers of romance about freedom, themselves know nothing of our river history and haven't the least conception of our river psychology.

It was this river life that frustrated monopoly and restriction in the first years of the discovery of America. It defied the establishment of empire in the European sense. Rulers were unable to get at any of the people who had let themselves loose in the land, safe upon these gliding rivers and hidden wastes. Look at the American Revolution! The British, who had conquered India

and dominated over Europe, lost a handful of people in America. What was the first notable achievement of Washington? The crossing of the Delaware! In the dead of night he and his men silently picked themselves up and moved away. In the morning there was nothing. Nobody to fight. Nobody to conquer. What could be done with people moving and flowing through their own landscape?

To disentangle the skeins of human history one need only take up a single broken end and serve back through the knots and whorls of fact and fumbling, till its purpose becomes clear. For in spite of all the complications of human relationships, the underlying motives are fundamentally simple—the instinct for power and free mobility. The unaccountable impulses that send the eel down the rivers to lay their eggs in the Sargasso Sea, the urge that impels the salmon to fight its way up the rivers of the earth, the drive that keeps the albatross a-wing over the trackless seas for days on end, are the self-same forces that stirred some Europeans on to exploration. To move, to roam, to penetrate, are instincts that have had more potent influences on the history of man than the desire for wealth and empire. For what are wealth and empire but the wherewithal to move and the space in which to move.

It is because I wanted the story of the trapper to reflect the movement of life in the new world which opened up this continent, that I ended the book when the nineteenth century began. To write about the later period when Bridger and others roamed the plains would be to throw the whole book out of key. Bridger and his kind, coming later in the history of the fur trade, while trappers and hunters, soon found themselves invaluable as guides to the pioneers who moved westward across the plains. That was the beginning of a new era rather than the termination of an old. These men merge with the modern life. They seem the advance guard of our railroad-making and reflect the precision of our mechanical age more than the haunting intuition of the men who instinctively built a civilization in the wilderness. The shoals of scribes who fret the American scene with their books of adventure, the main burden of which is killing, and the main motive of

which is so-called love, have given a false face to western character. It will take other generations to disentangle these new skeins of current history.

Yet, after all, perhaps I am ending my book because it must make a show of ending somewhere. No history can come to an end. History has no dimensions, no perspective. Mankind is ever-living, and living men are always living their history. Christ and Napoleon are still with us. The mind knows a fact or it does not, and that which the mind knows, is. The happenings of the previous hour are as dead as the Egyptian mummies. Newspapers are right. The past is dead. News and news alone is vital. But the newspaper treats historical news exactly as it does the most recent divorce scandal. Gladstone was dead until a certain Mr. Wright slandered him, and brought him on to the front page of every daily in the world; while Tut-an-kamen is more alive to-day than the reigning Sultan of Egypt. Man cannot keep every experience at the crest of the mind, yet nothing that he has ever experienced was different essentially from that which he experiences to-day. It is the false glow that falls like a halo about our heroic dead that makes martyrs of our living. Hunters and fishers of the past receive our monuments, but our living hunters and fishers go hungry. Not till every fact of history is visualized as current news will man begin to make some progress in tolerance and simplification.

In the story of the huntsmen and the fishermen of all time we touch one of the basic impulses of the human race. Though this is an attempt at interpreting history through its economic forces, it is not an acceptance of the economic interpretation of history. However much one may see the pageant of human migration in the search for wealth and the means of comfort and subsistence, one is left helpless before the question as to why some men went and some did not. Why were so many men willing to endure poverty and suffering even to the last extremity in the pursuit of the fabulous and the intangible? Why did so many men set out upon the high seas or plunge into the untracked wilderness in search for furs, when all they received was loneliness, disease,

starvation and fights for reward. It was not for the sake of the heroic, as our romancers and typewriter-thumping braves would have us believe; not for the sake of subsistence, as some economic interpreters would convince us; not for the sake of a hereafter, as our ecclesiasts assure us;—not for these, but for something in men that makes some of them seek an escape from the limitations of society. This is hard for us to accept because our vanity cannot endure the thought that our presence is not always desired, but it becomes manifest, after a study of the life of the trapper, that some men find society distasteful. Some retire to the monastery, some to the library, and some to the woods. The trapper, the hero of this book, was alive and happy in the making of this land, but when the pioneer turned his tracks into a highway he retreated from the scene as his friends of the furry tribes had done.

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